FOR MEN ONLY

The Modern Man

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF MASCULINE INTEREST.

No. 3. [PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY.] WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 21, 1908. ONE PENNY.

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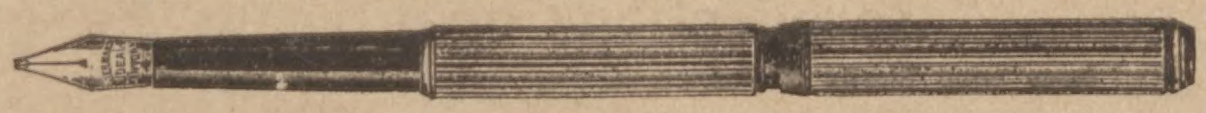

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I dare do all that may become a man. Who dares do more is none.—MACBETH.

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THE TROUBLESOME LETTER.

Would that their pens were broken!—LOWELL

Is it joyful to receive a letter? Women, I believe, like to get them, but the average man feels uncomfortable till he has torn open the envelope and proved that it does not contain either a bill or a worrying business communication.

The merely friendly letter, so far as men are concerned, has passed out of existence. A few words spoken over the telephone or brief messages scribbled on postcards, are the modern equivalent of the ancient screeds that men once wrote.

We would all of us drop letter-writing if we could, but there still remain a few people whom we must write to from time to time—the aunt with a fortune and a weak heart, for instance

Our chief anxiety in dealing with this estimable lady is to impress her with the warmth of our duty towards her. In meeting her we should convey some idea of our sentiments by the respectful manner of our salutation, or by courteously stopping in the middle of a sentence to allow her to describe to us her latest rheumatic symptoms, but on cold paper with a scratchy pen these delicate inflections of feelings are not to be accomplished.

The truth is that a man's letter is always abrupt and business like, and I have known dear old ladies shed tears of disappointment over such communications.

A letter comes upon the receiver with no sort of introduction. Even old ladies have dressmaker's bills, and the flurry which they are put into on receipt of your letter (for they seldom remember handwriting) generally has a reflex action which produces some resentment against the writer.

Here, then, you have not only the coldness of the written word, but the frame of mind of the receiver against you. To make up for it all you must write a little more warmly and affectionately than you would ever dream of speaking.

The greatest subtlety is required in answering a correspondent whom you know to be an inveterate gossip. In most cases she is a lady and a relative, and you are well aware that whatever you tell her will be disseminated throughout your family cilrcle, and all its connections.

I number two such amongst my correspondents, and lengthy dealings with them have shown me that the safest plan is to become, for the time being, a meteorological enthusiast; you must go into ecstasies concerning the weather, discourse at length upon the height or depth of the thermometer, and recount to them how far on the trees and plants are in your particular district. Such entertaining information they may retail to their heart's content.

There is one other point, and the whole art of letter-writing is made simple.

Never, my reader, write anything which you would object to your worst enemy seeing.

JAMES SIMPSON.

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THE VAGABOND.

Out-at-elbows, devil-may-care,
Vagabond, loafer, free as air,
Friendless, penniless, void of pride,
Glad that the dear dead past has died,
Brother he to the wastrel wind
And the open sky—and he finds them kind.

Unloved, unloving, a nameless rover,
He tramps from John o' Groat's to Dover,
Now north, now south, now east, now west,
Where living is easiest and best;
Heedless of sun or wind or rain,
Scornful of toil or worth or gain.

Wayfarer on the endless road,
He carries not Care's heavy load.
His wealth, this goodly earth and sky,
A healthy frame, a seeing eye.
Before the wind of chance he's sailed,
And has he, then, completely failed?

ERNEST WELLS.

RESPONSIBILITY'S POOR REWARD.

The best gunner in our navy receives only one shilling and twopence a day in wages. Yet in that man's hands during war there would rest the safety of his ship, costing over a million pounds, and perhaps his gunnery might even be the saving of our national prestige.

Take the case of the engine-driver as another example. He holds in the palm of his hand the lives of a hundred passengers, yet he is paid no better than a shopman, and he has to work longer hours.

The bank clerk is another member of the great underpaid. As successful embezzlers have proved, it is possible for a bank clerk to steal over £100,000 before he is detected. Yet for resisting all such temptations, and for doing his utmost to safeguard the interests of his employers, he never gets more than £3 a week, often much less.

WHY YOUR JOINTS CRACK.

After a hard day's exercise, when you are thoroughly tired out, your joints manifest a tendency to crack.

This is wrongly attributed to stiffness. The real cause lies in the temporary absence of the coating of the sinovial fluid which should normally be between the joints. This fluid constitutes a natural lubricant and forms a layer between the bones so that friction and chafing are reduced to a minimum.

When you get up in the morning your joints are full of this fluid, but it gradually disappears through use during the course of the day. Such is the decrease in some cases that men who are six feet tall in the morning fall half-an-inch short of that at night. In the spinal column there are many small joints, and the construction of these, owing to the using up of the sinovial fluid, accounts for the difference in the height.

The lack of sinovial fluid becomes a chronic condition with old people; hence their joints crack continually.

RAT-CATCHER STORIES.

BY ONE IN THE BUSINESS.

I have heard it said that the day of the rat-catcher is past, but it isn't true. The trade has declined a lot, what with improved traps and the use of poison, but there is still a living at the business for some of us.

Rats are so cute that they begin to know all the ordinary dodges for catching or killing them. They won't go into the traps, nor will they taste the doctored meat after a bit, so then I am called in to settle with them. It is mostly in big warehouses and shops that I get my best jobs.

The method of work depends on how I am paid. If I have so much a tail I must get hold of all the rats alive or dead, but if I am simply paid a lump sum to clear the building I go on a different plan.

When I don't have to show the tails, I just close the doors and windows of the lower storeys and let loose a dozen trained ferrets in the cellars. The rats soon leave these, and come up to the ground floor, and I bring the ferrets up there, too.

We go like this till I have the rats all in the top storey. The windows there I leave open at the bottom, and the rats jump out at them, and are killed on the street below, or escape to the next building.

Once, after I had cleared a building, I found that the bottom of the lift-shaft was littered a foot deep with dead rats, and it wasn't a nice job removing them.

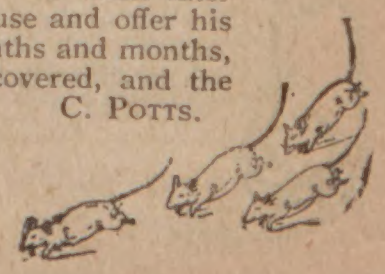
When I have to show the tails the hunt takes me longer. I close all the windows, and set ferrets working on every floor except the ground one. Here I station myself with a gun, loaded with lumps of salt, as shot would damage the walls. A charge of this stuns the rats for a time and lets me get at them with my stick. With my gun I can polish off a tidy number in an hour.

The toughest job is when I have to tackle a riverside warehouse. The river rat is different from the house kind, being about twice as big and a dozen times as ferocious.

Many a good ferret have I had killed by them, and I once got a nasty bite myself. This was from an old rat which had defied every effort to catch him. He was not a bit afraid of ferrets, but I got him to come out at last by fumigating the hole with sulphur. As he bolted past me I caught him a crack with my stick, and then picked him up. Instead of being dead as I supposed, he was very much alive, and his teeth met in my thumb. I managed to dislodge him only by stamping on him with my feet, and for weeks my hand was swollen from the effects of his foul teeth.

I once knew a rat-catcher who made the trade pay extra well, while it lasted. He used to catch the rats alive, take them from one house, and let them loose in another. A week later he would call at the second house and offer his services. This went on for months and months, but at last his game was discovered, and the police made him clear out.

C. POTTS.



Sublime tobacco! Which from east to west,
Cheers the Tar's labour or the Turk man's rest.—
BYRON.

To make suggestions to the seasoned smoker is like offering a code of rules and regulations to the lover; the devotee of tobacco, like the man in love, finds his chief delight in the neglect of all systems and orders.

It is, therefore, to the man who has not yet learnt the full enjoyment of the weed that I humbly offer these hints, the product of my own lengthy wooing of Lady Nicotine.

First get your pipe. Meerschaums are reserved for your lady friends to present you with, so I may take it that you are selecting a briar.

Be not tempted with shape or texture till you have fully considered the uses to which that pipe is to be put. If you contemplate smoking it at your ease in an armchair, you may let your fancy run to one of these giants with the huge bowls and bended stems; but if you are to smoke the pipe while working, you will want something light, so that it may be held between the teeth without risk of jerking out a few. The size, therefore, must depend on your intentions.

THE ART OF SELECTION.

The price must be according to your knowledge of pipes.

I have known a man who always picked his briars from the shilling basket, and extracted full enjoyment from them, but he was a person of special gift; he could tell at a glance the bowl that would crack, and he knew by intuition which would taste of varnish till its last drawn breath.

The average buyer is not safe in paying less than eighteenpence for his pipe, and, if he does not grudge half-a-crown, so much the better.

Even then there are points to be noted. The outlet must be at the bottom of the bowl if the pipe is ever to draw easily. Those where the hole is nearly half way up are a constant vexation; they demand hard puffing, are difficult to clean, and make the tobacco burn all down one side.

If you intend carrying the pipe in your pocket, you had better get a case for it, otherwise you will reek of stale tobacco; but be not led astray by the attractiveness of the case; it is only an accessory. The pipe is the main thing, and the best are often to be found in the least pretentious cases.

INITIAL TRIALS.

After the purchase of the briar comes the task of breaking it in. More than one cigarette smoker has been turned from his purpose of adopting the pipe by the villainous taste of the first few draws. The varnish has to be burnt off, and the lack of joy in the first pipeful is a thing to which the smoker must resign himself.

I knew a man who always broke in his briars with a cycle pump, and, following his advice, I once made the experiment. Having packed the bowl with tobacco, I attached the pump to the stem, and by blowing it gently I induced the tobacco to smoulder. Delighted with this success, I rammed down the piston more forcibly, till a glow came from the pipe like the radiance from a blacksmith's forge.

When the last thread of tobacco was consumed, I found that a hole had been burnt clean through the wood. This happened in my greener days. Now I break in my briars with gentle puffing, enduring the taste of the varnish patiently and anticipating the joy to come.

When you have smoked the pipe a week, you will discover a layer of charred tobacco, about the sixteenth of an inch thick, encrusted inside the bowl. Some of this must be removed, but let me implore you to scrape gently, scrape with care.

The char is very hard, and your knife, when it does penetrate the layer, is apt to do so with force, probably slicing a piece out of the bowl.

Never cut away all the char, for it acts as a protection to the root, and makes the pipe smoke sweetly. On the other hand, if you let the layer become too thick, the bowl is likely to crack owing to the difference of expansion and contraction.

After each smoke knock out the ashes, and jerk the pipe sharply to remove all lingering drops of juice. If this is done systematically, the bore will remain clear for a considerable time. Sooner or later, however, the best pipe grows asthmatic, and its breaths hard to draw. Then it must be cleaned.

CLEANING A PIPE.

Cleaning a pipe is a dirty business. You had better lay in a dozen proper cleaners—those little arrangements of twisted wire with a few bristles in the middle. Their only faults are that these bristles have a knack of sticking in the bowl, finally to enter the smoker's mouth, and that, as the contrivances are rather elaborate, one is much tempted to use them a second time.

Such things have ruined happy homes. The stench of a pipe-cleaner that has once been used is guaranteed to permeate the whole of a large-sized room.

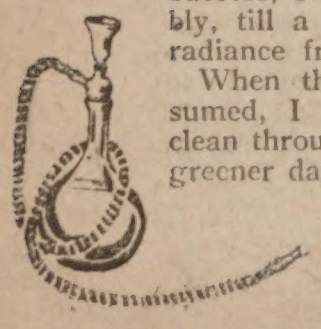
A spill of paper tightly rolled, or straightened hairpin is nearly as good. The great thing is to apply some such remedy as soon as the pipe shows the faintest need for it.

When a pipe has become thoroughly foul, the treatment must be more drastic. Jam the mouthpiece into a tap, preferably of hot water, and let it run for five minutes. After this the pipe should be laid aside till it is thoroughly dry; if you attempt to smoke it while it is still damp, steam will be generated in the pores of the wood, and the bowl will probably be cracked.

Finally let me persuade you to have at least three pipes in active service. Like a razor, a pipe is all the better for having a rest.

The connoisseur will go much further than this; he will have a pipe for joy, a pipe for sorrow, a pipe of peace, a pipe of strife, and so on indefinitely. He will, in fact, have anything except a smoking cabinet or a home-made tobacco pouch.

J. T. FULLERTON.



THE TRIUMPH OF SCOTLAND.

The Englishman says that in 1603 England annexed Scotland; the Scot replies that in 1603 Scotland transferred her capital from Edinburgh to London.

Be that as it may, three out of every five important positions in England are now held by our friends from across the Border. A glance at history helps to explain this phenomenon. All great conquests have been made by Northern peoples over Southern nations. The Goths and Vandals broke the power of Rome, and later the Norsemen laid the whole of the west coast of Europe at their feet.

The colder North breeds a hardier race of men, because the inclemency of the weather kills the weaklings. The survivors are conquerors in spite of themselves.

There is a further reason for the success of Scotsmen in England. The Scot is prepared to sacrifice present comfort for a greater remote benefit. The Englishman wants all his comforts now, and says of the future: "Let it rip!"

Again, the Scot has a commercial instinct which enables him to get more for his money. A Scotch family will live as well on £100 a year as an English one will on half as much again.

HAVE YOU FACED DEATH?

A SKETCH.

"I suppose I have," said the fox-hunter, "but you know that is not the sort of thing a fellow thinks about when he is galloping over a good country on a hot scent. The crisp morning air knocks thoughts of that kind out of your head.

"I have seen more than one man killed at a ditch I know of, and as I have taken it many times, I suppose Death was grinning at me out of the bushes, but I took no notice of him."

* * * * *

"Yes," said the nurse, "Death may be looked upon as one of the hospital staff. When we have done all we can to fight disease and have failed, Death ends the sufferings that have defied us. We fight him to the best of our ability, but when the patient sees that the end is inevitable he sometimes meets Death halfway and with open arms."

* * * * *

"Not half!" said the soldier. "Why, what do you suppose we gets our shillin' a day for? But Death does not seem so bad when there's a few of you facing him together. Once I got a bullet in the chest and lay unconscious for some hours. I suppose I had a taste of what Death was just then, but it seemed to me not unlike getting knocked out in the gymnasium when you're having a turn with the gloves.

"When the times comes for us to make our second acquaintance, I hope it will be in the heat of the fight and not in quiet and at home."

* * * * *

"Don't speak of it," cried the mother shuddering; "I have done more than face it; I have watched it take from me the little one who was dearer to me than myself or my husband, but that very fact will make me the less unwilling to face Death when it comes to my own turn."

* * * * *

"Once," said the convict, "for ten ghastly days I lay in the condemned cell, Death peeping round the corner of the door and jeering at me.

"He was not always in front of me, because there was some hope of a reprieve, but I think that made these ten days all the worse. If there had been no hope I could have nerved myself better to the inevitable. But they did get a reprieve, and I was sent here.

"Am I better off? Look about you. Look at these cold, thick walls. Look at those wretches who once were men, and answer the question yourself. Had I died then I might have died as a man. Now——"

* * * * *

"What a rummy question!" said the sailor. "Of course I have. Me and old Davy Jones we're almost pals. I'd rather the sea have me than the land, and have me it will one day, perhaps when the breeze is fresh and the swell is lapping over the deck. Then there will be one more in Davy Jones's locker."

* * * * *

"I have," said the one-armed beggar, "but it was all on the quiet like—no bands playin', and no people cheerin' theirselves hoarse. I was only a nipper then—a page, they called me—but I managed to put the fire out and save the folk in the hotel from bein' roasted. What matter if I did lose my arm because of the burns? I saved some women and kids, and it's nice to think back upon."

* * * * *

"My God!" cried the swindler. "How dare you ask me such a question? Death? To face all the people I have wronged? The widows and the old men, the wretches whom I have put through the mill to grind out what gold they had? It will be some time, you say? You have ruined my peace of mind by suggesting such a thought. Get out of this, or I shall go mad!"

F. M. HACKER.

THE BEAUTIFUL THIEF.

COMPLETE SHORT STORY.

BY SIMON LOFTUS.

He had just finished making his purchases at the Piccadilly jeweller's, and was drawing on his gloves preparatory to sauntering forth, when the door of the shop opened and the girl came in.

Her toilet was not a costly one, but in these days many women of wealth have a fad of dressing plainly. It was neat, and the colour had been chosen with care, for it was exactly the same shade of blue as her eyes. Moreover she had dark hair, and a pair of blue eyes beneath black lashes form a combination which proves most deadly.

Leslie Higgins picked up a trumpery little silver box from the counter and pretended to examine it closely. It gave him an opportunity to observe the newcomer. He looked her up and down as a man might a horse, for the young gentleman was beginning to be something of a connoisseur.

He held the little silver box in front of him and looked over the lid of it at the girl as she examined a tray of valuable brooches. Presently she held out her little gloved hand—and such a pretty little hand it was—and pointed to something in a case behind. The shopman turned to get it for her, and, as soon as she had a good view of his back, Leslie Higgins saw her nip up one of the brooches and put it in her muff.

The shopman did not trouble to turn round, for he had seen in a mirror what had taken place. He simply pressed an electric bell, and the manager came from his private office.

"This lady," said the shopman, "has taken a diamond brooch from the tray and put it in her muff."

Such occurrences were not unknown at the Piccadilly jeweller's, and the manager asked whether she would like to come to a private room and be searched, or whether she would prefer the police to be called in at once.

Leslie Higgins was astounded, but he had heard that female shoplifters were not infrequently good-looking, and he began to think that his judgment had been at fault, and that the girl with the blue eyes and the black lashes belonged, after all, to the poor who help themselves.

But the girl's face, when the accusation was made, convinced the young man that he was wrong in this opinion. She was obviously no common thief. There was nothing brazen about her. She pretended no great indignation. She merely turned very white and cast down her eyes.

Leslie Higgins rose from the chair where he had been seated.

"Mr. Pulborough," he said to the manager, "your assistant has made an unfortunate error. I myself saw exactly what happened. When this lady indicated something she required from the case behind, I observed her muff catch upon one of the brooches. It was, I assure you, the purest accident."

The manager was not convinced, for he had known muffs catch on brooches without the circumstance being accidental at all. Mr. Leslie Higgins, however, was becoming a very profitable customer, and tact demanded that he should not prosecute in this case—provided he got the brooch back. The lady apparently realised just how the matter stood, for at this precise moment the brooch tinkled from her muff on to the floor.

"Why, there it is!" she cried delightedly, picking it up. Then, turning to Leslie, she added: "I cannot thank you, sufficiently, sir, for having observed the true manner in which the accident occurred. But for you I should have found myself in a most uncomfortable predicament."

She bowed to the manager and left the shop. Leslie set down the little silver box on the counter and followed. He found her standing on the pavement just outside, and when she saw him she came up with her hand outstretched.

"I am deeply grateful to you," she said, and she blushed in a manner that was flattering. "I suppose you have guessed that I did actually attempt to steal that brooch. I am therefore the more indebted to you; not only did you save me from being arrested, but you saved me from becoming a thief. I had never done anything wrong in my life before, and it was only the direst poverty that drove me to it."

Leslie Higgins took the hand she offered him, and gripped it rather closer and held it rather longer than there was any need for.

"I am extremely sorry to hear of your misfortunes," he said, "and glad to have had it in my power to do what I could. Should I be presuming too much if I asked you to come and have some lunch with me? Possibly I might be able to help you."

The girl offered no objection. She was not forward, did not lack reserve, but was merely free from the foolish formal stiffness of most English women.

They lunched together and, bit by bit, after much clever questioning on his part, he drew from her a heart-rending story.

It appeared that her father had been a colonel in the army and that he had died extremely poor. What little money he had left, his widow had used to pay off his debts, and she and the daughter and a young boy had been living for the past two years from hand to mouth in a London slum. The mother had fallen ill, and it was to obtain some comforts for her that the girl had been tempted to steal.

Leslie Higgins would have liked to have given her there and then a cheque for £20, but he felt that she was hardly the type of girl to whom one could offer money without grossly offending her.

Possibly, he thought, he might be able to offer a money present to her young brother, and with this and perhaps other motives, he suggested that he should see the young lady home. She modestly thanked him, and they set off together for Hoxton in a motor-cab.

The driver was a young man with a perverted sense of humour, and beside his pace-indicator he had fixed up a little round of looking glass which revealed what was going on in the cab behind.

It was a dull and foggy afternoon, and the blue eyes that blinked through the black lashes made Leslie Higgins feel very gallant, a circumstance which was not resented by the young lady, for in gratitude she was tender.

And the driver looked into the little mirror, and grinned at it, and sometimes he grinned at the drivers of motor-cabs he met, for when they looked into his cab they grinned too.

Being a judicious young man with a well developed instinct for commercial chances, he took the risk of driving them to Hoxton by the longest possible route, and he was quite right in supposing that Leslie Higgins was thinking of other things much too earnestly to trouble about the shillings and pence that were clicking up on the taximeter.

"It seems quite like the old days," remarked the girl to her escort. "You remind me so much of the young officers in my father's regiment; it was considered one of the smartest in the whole Army."

To be thought like a military officer was the very summit of flattery, and Leslie in return assured her that she reminded him of no other person in the world, for no one was quite equal to her.

From time to time she rubbed in the poverty of the family, and at length he began to feel that he might possibly venture upon offering her a loan without giving offence, and so with much delicacy he made the suggestion, at the same time moving his hand towards his pocket.

But she snatched at his wrist and pulled the hand back.

"Oh, no, no!" she said, "You must not pull out your pocket book. The sight of the money might tempt me to accept the loan you so kindly offer, but I should only hate myself if I did it. Promise me," she said, "that you will not let me see your money."

And he promised.

"I will tell you what you might possibly do for me," she continued. "If you could get my brother a situation in some office I should be extremely obliged, and our difficulties would be largely at an end."

And again he promised to do his best.

At length they drew up at a house in a mean street in Hoxton, where she informed him they had rooms. She invited him to come upstairs and see her brother, and, if her mother was able to get up, to receive her thanks also.

Leslie Higgins was delighted at the opportunity of thus making himself solid with the family, and the girl led him upstairs, while the taximeter stood outside and ticked up the shillings and pence with great speed and regularity.

On the second floor they came to a room the door of which stood open, and the girl after peeping in, requested him to enter while she went to fetch her relatives. She closed the door behind her, and Leslie Higgins waited patiently.

To be the squire of a fair maiden in distress appealed strongly to the imagination of the young man. He tried to fool himself that the generous sentiments now warming his heart were but the recrudescence of an instinct inherited from an ancestor of long ago.

He was building up a nice, romantic pedigree for himself, when the nasty solid fact obtruded itself that the house of Higgins did not even know who its grandfather was, and that it owed its wealth to his father's skilful dealing in patent medicines.

The backyard on which the room looked out however was not an entertaining spectacle, and when twenty minutes had passed without the appearance either of his ensnarer or her brother or mother, he began to wonder what had become of her. Presently the door opened, and a middle-aged woman with a very broad face, who could never, never have been the colonel's wife, came into the room.

"Young man," she said, "was it a girl with blue eyes and black hair that brought you here? Ah, yes, I thought so. Well, she's done you brown. I saw you go in with her and I saw her come out, but I thought you might be a friend of some of the other tenants. She used to rent a room here but we had to put her out, the hussy, and she has not lived in this house for three months. If you've been in a cab with her look in your pockets."

He did so, and found them empty.

"That's her old game," said the broad faced woman, "and you may thank me, young man, for coming up when I did and letting you out, for she had locked you in."

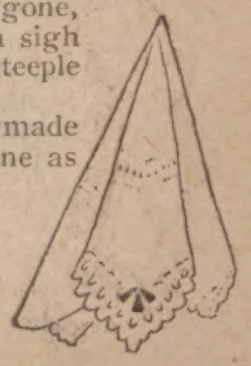
Leslie turned red and white and red again, felt a fool, and would have liked to have smoothed matters over by giving his rescuer a tip, but he had not even enough to pay his cab fare, and so his thanks were purely verbal.

On questioning the driver of the cab, he discovered that the lady had left the house a minute after entering it, had boarded a passing motor-'bus and would now be at the other side of London.

And so Leslie ordered the driver to go to his father's place in South Kensington, for only thus could he satisfy the demands of the man and the taximeter.

He put his hand in his watch pocket to see how the time ran, but the watch also had gone, to keep the pocket book company. With a sigh Leslie read the time from a neighbouring steeple and seated himself in the cab.

A cigarette would console him, and he made to light one, but his cigarette-case was gone as well.



The Gladiator.

Rapid Physical Development

A WEEKLY FEATURE.

Conducted by
F. G. MITCHELL, M.A.

WE ARE IMPROVING.

We have the authority of Sir Frederick Treves for saying that Britons are not smaller either in girth or height than their ancestors.

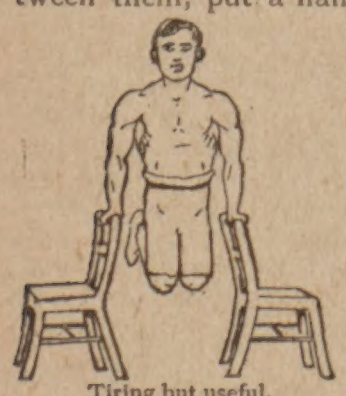
The King's surgeon might have gone a step further with safety. A glance at the suits of armour in our museums will prove that the national physique has undergone a distinct improvement. None but a boy could to-day get into a suit of old armour, and they were little more than boys in years as well as in physique who used to wear them.

The fighting man of the middle ages was married at fifteen, a father at sixteen, worn out at thirty-five and dead at thirty-six. The strenuous fighting life, instead of improving the physique, as might have been expected, merely shortened the natural span of life.

Improvement has been gradual since those early days, but it is within the last twenty years that we have made our biggest strides in physical culture. London 'buses and tubes are paying equally badly and the question is being asked: "Whither have the old passengers vanished?" The answer is that men who once rode in 'buses for short journeys have now the necessary energy to walk the distance with comfort and exhilaration. Not only are we better developed but we are becoming less lazy.

PARALLEL BARS.

Place a couple of chairs about two feet apart, the backs towards one another. Standing between them, put a hand on the top bar of each and lower your body till the knees almost touch the floor; then pull yourself up till your arms are straight, and repeat.



Tiring but useful.

The knees must be bent to prevent the feet touching the ground; in fact from the time of starting the exercise till the finish of it the feet should not be allowed to relieve the arms of the weight of the body, even when you have pressed yourself up to arm's length.

To avoid a fall, see that the chairs are not farther apart than is necessary to allow you sufficient room. The best kind are those with a rounded top bar, but if you are obliged to use chairs with sharp backs you can protect your hands by placing a folded handkerchief between each and the wood.

This exercise develops the wrists, forearms, biceps and the shoulder muscles, besides expanding the chest. Don't overdo it, as there is considerable strain on the heart.

BLESS THOSE STAIRS.

Let the man who each morning swears at the length of his office staircase, cease his execrations. Climbing a six-flight stair is as good exercise as riding a mile on a bicycle.

To get the best out of stair-climbing, don't run up. That gets it soon over, but overtaxes your heart, especially after lunch, without doing your muscles much good.

Take things deliberately. Remember that every muscle in the calf of your leg and in your thigh is being exercised and developed. Bearing this in mind, walk up slowly, without the assistance of the inviting hand-rail.

CALVES AND SHOULDERS.

Stand at attention with hands by the side. Raise yourself on your toes as high as possible, and, as you do so, sweep up your arms till the backs of the hands touch above your head.

Stretching.

Keep the arms quite straight all the time. Your hands should meet when you are on tip-toe, and should be lowered to your sides as your heels come back to the floor.

Inhale deeply as you rise, and exhale as you descend. Do it all slowly.

This exercise is practised in the Italian Army, and is conducive to a good carriage and a straight spine. It affords the quickest method of developing the calves of the legs, and is excellent also for the muscles of the shoulders and upper arms.

BOTH HANDS.

It is extremely useful in every kind of game and sport to be able to use the left as well as the right hand. Much of the success of Colonial Rugby football is due to the faculty which most of the players possess of kicking with either foot and of taking the ball equally well with either hand.

In boxing the usual position is to guard with the right arm and hit with the left; but it is always worth while practising the converse—hitting with the right and guarding with the left. If in a fight you adopt these tactics you will in most cases completely throw your opponent out of his reckoning. All his calculations have been made for the usual position and method and any deviation from this helps to bring about his downfall. Practising with either hand will make the duffer almost as good as the born fighter.

From the point of view of physical culture it is advisable to exercise the left side rather more than the right, as the right side has generally done its fair share in the day's work. In practising with a developer, the various exercises should be done twice or thrice extra by the left hand.

One of the best exercises for training the left hand is rowing, for the oarsman soon learns to backwater with the left as easily as with the right; this exercise, moreover, develops both sides of the body equally, a claim which cannot be put forward by all.

FOR THIGHS AND ANKLES.

Stretch yourself on your back, placing your clasped hands beneath your head. Then draw up your right leg, bending the knee and keeping the toe down as much as possible.

Next stretch the right leg out again, but do not allow the heel to touch the floor. As the

A capital exercise.

right is being stretched out, draw the left up; and as you stretch the left out, draw the right back again.

Repeat five times, keeping the heels off the ground throughout the exercise. While doing this exercise breathe deeply.

For this and similar exercises, it is advisable to keep some sort of rug or sheet to spread over the carpet.

The muscles developed here are those of the thighs, ankles and abdomen; but to make the exercise effective you must impose some strain by keeping the toes down.

PHYSICAL CULTURE DRESS.

WHAT DO YOU WEAR?

I should like to know how other physical culturists dress while doing their exercises.

The athletes of the music-hall stage are fond of appearing in pink tights, or decorated with a leopard skin after the fashion of the classic performers, but nobody supposes that they practice in private in such a costume.

In the gymnasium we dress according to the custom of the club, generally in singlet with white trousers and rubber soled shoes, but who shall say what is the favourite costume with the men who go through their exercises morning and night in the privacy of their own rooms?

For a long time it was my custom on getting up in the morning to don a thin cotton-mesh singlet and a pair of white shorts, which I was in the habit of wearing for boxing; I even put on socks, and spent a couple of minutes tying on nicely-pipeclayed shoes.

So attired, I went through my exercises till I had had enough, and the sweat was breaking out. Then I would throw on a dressing-gown, slip through to the bathroom, have a plunge, and return to dress in the garb of civilisation.

By and by there came to be greater claims upon my time, and it was impossible for me to get to bed as early as I had been used to.

The consequence was that I wanted to lie till the last minute each morning. Add to this the fact that the first enthusiasm of physical culture had not worn off, but had become just a little dulled.

One morning it struck me that nothing could be more irksome than getting into my boxing togs to carry through the exercises, and so, after a little mental wrestling with laziness, I at length yielded and skipped them. The next morning I skipped them without any mental wrestling at all, and on the morning after that with something approaching delight.

Several weeks passed without my touching dumb-bells or developer, and then I began to discover that I was not sleeping so soundly or eating so well as I used to do, and I was driven to the conclusion that it was the lack of exercise that did it.

I reviewed my fearful past and tried to discover the real reason of my having given up the exercises, and at length I came to the conclusion that it was all due to the dreadful bore of putting on special togs to do them in.

Since then the boxing togs have been kept in a drawer exclusively for boxing, and the bedroom exercises are carried out in a costume that would make the Manchester Watch Committee sit up.

I do my exercises in the morning clad in my pyjamas minus the upper garment, and in the evening I go through them before the pyjamas are donned. Whether it is the advantage of this air bath, or whether it is the relief of doing without all those dressings and undressings, I do not know; but since I dropped wearing special togs for physical culture I have not again been attacked by the temptation to drop it.

In all exercises where toggery is necessary I have always preferred shorts to long trousers whenever the choice was possible.

Flannel trousers are usually so wide that they do not knee, and even if they did you would not care much, so it cannot be the fear of damaging them that makes me uncomfortable when I exercise in them.

They flap about your feet, and if you bend your knees, as in many sports you must do, you find the cloth tighten across the joint and hamper your movements.

Books on physical culture are generally illustrated with sketches or photographs of gentlemen doing exercises and attired in trousers. I always have a feeling that these garments have been put on so as not to shock the photographer; but, after all, there is nothing indelicate about shorts, for are not they the public costume of our footballers? H. PATERSON.

SHAMS.

THE INSIDE OF SIDE.

Somebody once said that there is as much pleasure in being cheated as in cheating. If such be the case, the general public must be having a rare good time of it, for to-day is the day of Sham.

A university degree may or may not indicate ability in its holder, but the American university degree indicates nothing except that its owner has paid so many dollars for its bestowal. It is chiefly American degrees which Nonconformist ministers possess. While preaching Truth they practise Sham.

For the most part, they are uneducated men, however godly, and, if the "man" prevailed over the "uneducated," they would rest content with presenting themselves to their congregations without such trumpery baubles as meaningless letters behind their names. For a man to pretend to be a Doctor of Divinity, if he has not earned the degree, is an immoral thing. He swells his collection plate by false pretences, and is little better than a thief.

There is a certain general who has recently been advertising himself by a new scheme. He is known affectionately to the British public by a nickname, and at the end of the South African war much wonder was expressed that he had not been given a title. The most suitable would have been that by which he was known to the men under him—A.D.V.

During the campaign his position was such that he was constantly in the limelight, and it was even said that many of the flattering reports to the papers were written by himself.

A few trumpery books have aided him in giving the impression that he is a man of brains, but nothing can be further from the truth.

He is one of the Lords of Sham.

The average employer hedges himself about with a barrier of taciturnity. His position is a false one, into which he has been boosted by influence or accident. To show himself as he is would be to make his place untenable, so he pretends to a merit that he possesses not, and swells the rank and file of the Shammers.

Sporting shams are about us at every hand. If you ask a young man why he does not go in for sport, he tells you that the demands of business make it impossible for him to follow his favourite recreation.

He has not the moral courage to tell the truth—which is that he has no inclination for athletics, a confession which is not in itself discreditable. Athletics are the fashion, and those who love them not sham that they do.

Flannel suits are left on the tailor's hands if they are not of the approved up-river pattern. Half the wearers will never do five minutes' rowing, but their clothes must be of a kind to aid them in the mild deceptions which they practise. More Sham.

There are malingerers outside the barracks and the prison. Every tenth man imagines he is a martyr, afflicted with a lingering disease. All that is the matter with him is that his health is not of ideal robustness, but perfect health is so rare that it can scarcely be said to exist. The man who has over-eaten himself shams that he is an interesting invalid.

In this, however, there is some consolation; his money is quickly transferred to the pocket of the patent medicine makers, who are, at any rate, sensible business men.

Social shammers are ubiquitous. Sham pedigrees are thrust upon your ears, artfully, but few men have as long a traceable pedigree as their dogs.

Coats of arms appear on notepaper, on cigarette cases, without any fee having been paid, or any right established for their use. John Smith becomes J. Browne-Smythe. Here, again, there is one accidental merit in his action, for he brands himself as an ass, a soft mark whose money may be extracted by the man with brains. He is one of the little Shammers. It is better to be solid silver than gold-plated.

DAVID COOPER.

CONVINCING THOUGH ILLOGICAL.

Mr. Aethelred-Smith seemed pleased with himself that morning.

"Well, John," he asked his coachman, "what do you think of my new mare?"

"She's the worst tempered 'oss I've ever seen, sir."

"That can't be," replied the gentleman with the hyphen. "That horse has not got a Roman nose, its ears do not lie back, and it has not a wicked eye. Moreover it is not black. Besides it's got three white feet, and a horse with three white feet is always good tempered."

"Yes sir," replied John, touching his forelock submissively, "I know she's a good tempered 'oss now that I've heard your arguments. What made me think she was bad tempered was because I went into her stall this morning three times to try to feed her and each time she kicked me out. I felt kind of convinced the other way."

And John rubbed the mark of an unlucky horse shoe on his chest.

LEAF HIM ALONE.

As he sat on the stile you might have thought by his hat that he was a clergyman, but as your eyes passed over the rest of him you knew for a certainty that he was an assassin. Assassins always wear hats like clergymen.

His face was white and it had not been shaved since the day before yesterday. With muttered curses at the wind he threw the end of his long black cloak over his shoulder, and the wind blew it back again, and the assassin cursed afresh and shivered.

Presently the village doctor passed along the road, and the assassin at once saw the bond of sympathy that linked the two professions. The doctor saw it too, and asked the assassin what in all the wide world had happened to make him so like a badly printed picture postcard.

"My friend and brother," said the assassin, with chattering teeth, "dost see that puffed up and corpulent varlet passing from our vision? It seemed to me he would be a goodly prize, and so I went to him and plunged my dagger in his vitals, but"—and the assassin trembled at the ghastly thought—"my hand and dagger plunged within him and came out again without doing him the slightest hurt. I might as well have tried to stab a feather quilt."

"That, sir," said the doctor, "is our local disciple of vegetarianism. He is so soft that even when motor-cars run over him his rotundity bounds back to its former shape. Bullets and daggers have no chance; let us poison his nettle tea."

And they set off together on their philanthropic mission.

A FELLOW FEELING.

The Meenester's son had discovered that the place he had gone to for a short holiday possessed a very decent golf links, so he wired to his father to send on his clubs. Accordingly the Meenester carried the clubs to the railway station, but before he reached the parcels office he was accosted by a parishioner, Sandy McGraskie to wit.

"Mornin' sir," said Sandy, "ye've been golfin', I see."

"No," said the Meenester, "I have not."

"Then," said Sandy, "ye'll be going somewhere to golf?"

"No," said the Meenester, "I am not going to play at all."

"Gie's a shak' o' your hand!" said Sandy. "I've tried the same trick masel'. Ye've just brought the clubs to deceive your wife, like!"

LONDON CLUB LIFE.

What greater crime,
Than loss of time.—THOMAS TUSSER.

The young man of wealth finds it necessary to join certain clubs in order to enjoy the amusements for which he has acquired a taste at the public schools.

Queen's will supply him with tennis and racquets; at the Bath Club he can swim or fence; at Ranelagh or Hurlingham he plays polo; at Woking or at Sunningdale he golfs; at the Turf or the Badminton he makes his bets and discusses racing matters generally.

The man of letters will be a member of the Athenæum, the library of which cost £29,127; here he may write all day if he likes, using a collection of books that stands all but unrivalled. The globe-trotter joins the Travellers', where he meets other men whose delight lies in exploration.

'Varsity men assemble at the Oxford and Cambridge, and at the New University. Actors congregate at the Garrick, the Green Room and the Savage. Politicians gather at the Constitutional, the Reform, or the 1900 Club.

These and some other classes which will occur to the mind of the reader may be termed the clubites, who have a definite and useful purpose in view, but these form a comparatively small number of the residents in clubland.

The majority are members of clubs because these institutions supply them with an easy and pleasant way of getting through a wholly useless existence.

A man may begin his day by loafing for half-an-hour at the Batchelors'. Later he calls at other Piccadilly clubs, and presently works his way down to those in Pall Mall. By this time evening has arrived, and at one of the latter clubs he dines. It is a routine through which he goes day after day, profitless alike to himself and his fellow-beings.

Ten years ago the various loafing clubs were extremely prosperous. You had to wait twenty years in some cases before you could be elected a member, and candidates were so plentiful that the committee could pick and choose as they liked.

Now a six years' wait is considered a long one, and many of the best-known clubs actually canvass for members.

The consequent introduction of undesirables leads to the resignation of many of the old-fashioned and exclusive members, and the membership is consequently reduced.

This state of things is not to be wondered at; it is merely a development of the spirit of the age. Even the semi-imbecile upper classes have now come to the conclusion that total idleness is not entertaining, and consequently they devote themselves to politics, or dabble in business; some try to write books, others to paint pictures, and the majority try to occupy their time in one way or another, even though it is only in travelling about from one place to another.

The old loafing clubs prospered at a time of national decadence. The period of rejuvenation having set in, their day is past, and soon all the loafing clubs, except those devoted, like the Senior United Services to old men, will have to close their stately doors.

And their passing will be unwept. They have wasted the lives of men who might otherwise have been useful to the community, and have absorbed huge sums that might have been better spent.

Fifty guineas is quite a common entrance fee, while the lowest of a really first-class club is nineteen. The annual subscriptions vary between twelve and seven guineas. Even those who have money to burn, prefer spending it in ways where they will get more entertainment or benefit than they do from these useless clubs.

Concerning the morality of certain clubs, I shall merely say that it leaves much to be desired. An intelligent member of a few exclusive clubs could tell tales that would horrify every self-respecting person.

R. WOODCRAFT.

Readers as Writers

GOOD PRICES FOR PARAGRAPHS.

Next week and afterwards this page will contain contributions by our readers. Select a subject you know all about—your trade or your favourite recreation—and send us a few facts concerning it; paragraphs should not exceed 250 words. You are free to send your contribution on a postcard if you like.

The chief thing to bear in mind is that all paragraphs must be of masculine interest.

Each week a prize of One Guinea will be forwarded to the writer of the best paragraph, and 5s. to the senders of each of the others used.

If your paragraph arrives too late for one week's competition it will be considered for that of the following week. Rest assured that all contributions will be carefully read.

Do not allow the lack of a facile pen to prevent you from competing. If the stuff is good, absence of style will not injure your chances. We will lick it into literary shape.

Address your letters or post-cards to the Paragraph Editor, THE MODERN MAN, Westinghouse Building, Strand, London.

WHERE THE MONEY GOES.

If you wonder why your money disappears so quickly, start keeping an account of it for one week. Make a note each morning how much cash you start with, and at night count what you have left. Then write out a list of the items you spent the balance upon, till you have accounted for every penny.

You will find that there is about a shilling which you can in no way account for. That means you have spent a shilling without getting in return anything worth remembering. In other words, you could save seven shillings a week without depriving yourself of a single thing worth having.

There is nothing so good as the private cash book for helping you to cut off useless expenditure, only you must not leave it lying about, unless you make your notes in hieroglyphics!

BOYS' CLUBS.

There is not a town from Plymouth to Inverness but has its ice-cream shop. Many have a score. Most of these establishments are run by Italians who have been expelled from their own country, and it is to them that our men of the future entrust their leisure hours.

Against the consumption of sweets and ice-cream by children there is, of course, nothing to be said, and where sweet shops are run by Englishmen and old ladies, there can be little fault to find. The conduct of the Italian shops is, however, so questionable that we have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that the doors of every-one of them should be closed by the police.

We have much respect for foreigners in general, but there are wastrels in every country, and we have enough at home without importing.

The hours kept in these places are exactly the same as those of the public houses, except that they are open all day on Sunday. They act as juvenile clubs, and furnish their habitués with a probationary education for the tap-room, or worse.

THE CANDID REFUSAL.

People who ask each other to their houses expect a certain number of refusals, and they know perfectly well that half of those who excuse themselves do not give the true reason for their absence.

If you don't want to go to a dinner-party, it is excusable to conceal your true sentiments and give some imaginary reason, calculated to be inoffensive to the feelings of your host or hostess. On such little deceptions does the whole fabric of social intercourse rest.

It is only when we have to deal with a rugged and outspoken character that we find these things brushed ruthlessly aside. On one occasion Lord Charles Beresford refused an invitation to a garden party with this brief telegram: "Sorry cannot come. Lie follows to-morrow."

AWKWARD HANDS.

No part of the anatomy is so difficult to manage with any pretensions to grace as the hands. Our military authorities have recognised this for years. The infantry man is supplied with a "swagger cane," and the cavalry soldier carries when off duty a riding whip, which is used for no other purpose than to keep him from being awkward with his hands.

Here we have prevention, but not cure.

When a man accustomed to a walking stick is deprived of it for a time we get an exhibition of awkwardness. Sitting down he is all right, but if he has to stand he either puts his hands in his pockets or rests them on his waist or clutches some neighbouring bit of furniture. Sometimes he uses one of them to curl his moustache, not because it wants curling but because this disposes of one of these awkward members.

The man who does not carry a walking stick, on the other hand, is accustomed to let his hands hang by his side, and in time he becomes unconscious of their existence. They worry him no more than do his feet or his ears. Those who have made exhibitions of themselves by not knowing what to do with their hands while crossing a ballroom or while speaking at a meeting, might adopt the little hint here implied.

MAKING GOLF POPULAR.

It would be for the great good of the country if local authorities gave us better facilities for golf. It would then cease to be the game of the upper and middle classes and would be enjoyed equally by the working-man, to the benefit of his health and the detriment of the pub.

Edinburgh has three municipal golf courses, the charge per round being twopence. Even this moderate fee brings in a yearly revenue of £1,380. Bournemouth's links are nearly as profitable.

The Yarmouth Golf Club allows working-men players to use its green free. As showing how quickly they become proficient, two of these working men recently defeated the captain of the club, and also the Rev. Mack, one of the cleverest members.

It is a fallacy to suppose that golf entails much expense. There is no need for a caddie, and no need for a club house. Provided you live near a links your sport scarcely costs you anything. In Scotland no man is too poor to afford the luxury of golf, and it would be well that the same should hold throughout the rest of the island.

WHIP SIGNALS.

For one 'bus-driver to signal to another with his whip is a punishable offence in the eyes of the 'bus companies, but the men have invented an unobtrusive code which baffles detection.

All the passes made are of so natural a kind that the signaller might just be stretching his limbs, or altering the position of his whip to ease one particular set of muscles.

The most useful signal is that conveyed by sloping the whip over the left shoulder, for this informs the driver of a oncoming 'bus that there is a ticket-inspector waiting down the road. The driver passes this message to his conductor by giving the footboard a sharp tap or two with the butt of his whip.

When the whip is held upright, with the hand that grasps it raised to the level of the face, the message conveyed is that farther on there is an officious policeman who is trying to ingratiate himself with his superiors by finding a case.

The whip also plays an important part in the regulation of city traffic. A policeman stops one stream of vehicles to let another set pass. When a string of vehicles are close together, there would be grave danger of a collision should the foremost draw up without warning those behind. The driver who is going to stop therefore holds up his whip, a sign which is repeated by each driver behind him. Should there be no stoppage but merely some obstruction which necessitates slowing down, the whip is held aloft and the lash whirled round and round.

HAIRCUTTING DANGERS.

Some barbers are worse than others, but after a visit to any of the fraternity you will unearth a few pieces of hair from inside your ear.

In the majority of cases no harm results, and the tiny hairs are removed when next you wash. Occasionally, however, one of these fragments finds its way through the outer ear till it presses against the drum, where it causes the most intense pain. It is not always possible to locate the cause of the mischief; you may feel violent neuralgia in your face and blame some innocent old tooth.

The remedy is so simple that barbers should adopt it universally. If each of the customer's ears is plugged with a little bit of cotton wool all falling pieces of hair are prevented from entering. Nervous readers can easily take this precaution before visiting their barber's.

WHY WE GAMBLE.

Long-faced people say it is a disastrous thing that a man should stake money with bookmakers for whose integrity he cannot vouch, on horses about which he knows nothing, ridden by men about whom he wots as little, on courses of which he is absolutely ignorant—and perhaps these critics are right.

The average man cannot afford to lose the money which he bets, but it is that very fact which supplies the pleasurable element of his turf transactions. To know that you will be faced by a serious difficulty if you do not win, and that you will be the possessor of superfluous wealth should you succeed, lends to gambling its chiefest joy.

We all do it in one form or another. When we make love we take the risk of the lady refusing to listen to our advances. In business we take risks as a part of the day's work. It is the doubtfulness of success that makes it so charming.

To say that gambling is wicked is to utter a foolish thing, for in itself gambling is natural and harmless; its chief drawback is that its devotees always lose their money, though they get their fun.

SARCASM.

A man will pardon a knock-out blow sooner than the light word that makes him an object of amusement. The possessor of a ready and acid wit uses this fact, and levels his darts of sarcasm at those he desires to crush.

He sees a fault or a weakness, and focusses the attention of all upon it.

The thing is an interesting study. We each of us bristle with faults, and it is because we are painfully conscious of them that we resent their being brought to our notice and to the notice of those who know us. We should not, perhaps, blame the satirist but ourselves for the pain we receive through his jibes, for his arrows sting just so far as we know that his insinuation is true.

The sarcastic man is never popular. Sarcasm has made many a friend an enemy, but never an enemy a friend.

THEIR WORDS.

When the King hears a story he likes, he says: "That's good!" It has become a sort of catchword with him, and is sedulously copied by those about him.

Mr. Asquith is fond of the word "elastic," and when you tell him something he doesn't quite believe, he answers with: "Pretty elastic that, isn't it?"

Mr. Balfour is noncommittal with his stock remark, for it expresses no opinion one way or the other. "Is that so?" he asks, while he smiles benignly upon you. Mr. John Burns likes a stronger expression: "Get out!" This must, however, yield place in point of emphasis to Mr. Kipling's "Rot!" or Mr. Labouchere's cynical "Gammon!"

When Sir Charles Wyndham is speaking to a male friend he continually uses the phrase "Old man!" Mr. George R. Sims, under similar circumstances says: "My boy!"

John Meldrum: Motor Hater

COMPLETE SHORT STORY, MAKING A PLEASANT FORECAST.

By A. M. KIRKE.

"The motor-car is an amusement for the wealthy man, and a nuisance to everybody else."

Such was the opening of the letter which appeared in every paper throughout the country one morning over the signature "John Meldrum." There was humour in it, because the said John Meldrum was known to be one of the wealthiest millionaires on this side of the Atlantic.

His antipathy to motor-cars, however, was not difficult to understand, for he was extremely fond of horses, and had recently endeavoured to establish a regular coach service between London and Brighton, Guildford, Reading and other places. The services had been skilfully managed and at first were well patronised, for the fares charged were extremely low; but when the novelty had worn past the people ceased to patronise the coaches, for the clouds of dust made such travelling supremely uncomfortable.

As the motor-cars were chiefly responsible for this dust, it was natural that Mr. Meldrum should harbour resentment against the instruments by which his pet hobby had been killed. To me as a professional motor-driver his letter was extremely interesting.

"Take as an example," he continued, "a run from London to Brighton. A motor-car, containing four persons, will in covering these fifty miles give great discomfort to at least two hundred people—drivers of horse vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, cottagers and tramps—not so wealthy as the motorist, perhaps, but still human beings.

"Moreover the motor-car traffic is ruining the fruit crops in all fields that border upon the highways, while the sheep are contracting a new malady through eating the dust-covered grass. I do not cite here the fact that motors are continually killing people, because I presume that they do not do so intentionally, but the faults I have enumerated are committed knowingly, and no serious attempt has been made to protect the interests of other users of the highway.

"I suggest that every motor-car should be compelled to carry a tank of water, to be used for laying the dust on dry roads. Heavy penalties should be inflicted on all motorists who traverse a dusty road. If a car finds a road already watered, well and good; if on the other hand the road is dusty, it should be compelled by law to draw water from the nearest stream and sprinkle the road as it goes along.

"I admit that this would impose great inconvenience on the motorists who were the first to traverse the leading roads each day, but it is only right that they should bear the troubles attaching to their pastime instead of making other people the sufferers.

"I would also suggest that, instead of being fined for exceeding the speed limit, the driver of the motor-car, be he chauffeur or owner, should be summarily hanged to the nearest danger post as a warning to all other transgressors."

Most of my friends are engaged in the same business as myself, and when we met that evening the Meldrum letter was the only topic of discussion. None of us took it seriously, and for my own part I rather wondered that the newspapers had printed it, as the proprietors of most of them were wealthy men and themselves motor-car owners.

I need scarcely say that we were not in any way alarmed by the proposals he made, for, as one of my cronies pointed out, the Motor Association would fight any scheme that imposed the slightest inconvenience upon the sacred motorist, and Parliament would refuse to sanction any troublesome legislation, because most of the M.P.'s have motor-cars.

If Mr. Meldrum had suggested that our navy should be broken up, or that all the unemployed should be taken to sea and dumped well out of sight of land, he could not have raised a greater furore of opposition.

He was accused in next day's papers of being an inhuman scoundrel, a bloated millionaire who thought nothing of the inconvenience to which the humble motorist would be put; someone even suggested that motorists should make a special demonstration at his house near Tunbridge Wells. It was that mischievous suggestion that created all the trouble.

Motorists cottoned on to it at once, and on the following Saturday afternoon something like five hundred cars collected from all parts at Tunbridge Wells, and filed out of the town to Mr. Meldrum's palatial house.

The place was surrounded by a road, and divided only by a line of iron railings. Round and round that road ran the five hundred motor-cars, raising clouds of dust which swept across his lawns and found its way in at the open windows of the house.

They laughed as they drove back to town that night, but they did not laugh three days later when it was discovered that no petrol could be obtained.

Somebody had bought up every gallon in the country, and had made arrangements for intercepting the cargo of every petrol steamer as it arrived. It was at first thought that this was a mere matter of business, that someone had formed a corner in order to enhance the price, but conjectures took another turn when it was found that rubber had also been cornered, and that there was not a single spare tyre to be had except in a few country shops which had been neglected by the man who formed the ring.

John Meldrum was immediately suspected of being responsible for it, and presently he admitted frankly that he was, and that he would continue to prevent the sale of rubber and petrol till legislation was passed that would protect the lives and the comfort of non-motorists.

He had miscalculated for once. Within a week petrol was being made from potatoes in Irish factories belonging to the Motor Association, and a new process was invented whereby tyres could be made of leather instead of rubber. The corner was effectually broken, and once again motors scoured the country.

The "machinations of Meldrum," as one facetious paper called them, were laughed at, and it was thought that he had given up the fight.

I thought so too till I answered an advertisement offering an unprecedented salary to "a chauffeur of nerve, who is an expert and who will stick at nothing." I received a note inviting me to call on the advertiser and discovered that he was none other than Mr. Meldrum.

"Well," he said when I had shown him the various credentials proving my ability as a driver, "have you any objections to exceeding the speed limit?"

"No," I replied. "My first duty is to obey the wishes of my employer. If you want me to go at fifty miles an hour I shall do so."

"Regardless of the discomfort of everybody else!" he exclaimed. "You are a brute, but I believe you will suit my purpose. Better get round to the garage and inspect the car you are going to drive."

The car was a beauty and no mistake. It was more powerful than any racing car I had ever seen, and there were many improvements in the machinery that must have cost him a pretty penny. What struck me most was a large fan which had been fixed close to the ground between the rear wheels. It could, I saw, be set in motion by pressing a lever which threw its gearing into connection with the axle, but what its purpose was I had not the remotest idea.

On the following day I was to learn all about it. We left Mr. Meldrum's London house, crossed Westminster Bridge and set off towards Brighton. He made me drive so slowly that scarcely any dust was raised, and I began to think I was going to have an uncommonly rotten time, but just after we passed through Croydon a racing motor whizzed past us and my chief, who was sitting beside me, gave me the kind of instructions I like.

"Now," he said, "what you've got to do is to overtake that car and keep just about twenty yards in front of it."

I sounded my buzzer to inform him that we wished to get past, but he kept to the middle of the road.

"Turn off here to the right," said my owner. "Put on full speed, and in a couple of miles this road will bring us back to the main road. It is a little out of our way, but with our power I think we shall be able to get in front of him."

And so it turned out. Just as we re-entered the Brighton road we saw the racer rounding a bend behind us, a cloud of dust trailing away in his rear.

"Now," said my chief, "keep in the middle of the track, and don't let him pass you."

With that he pulled the lever that set the mysterious fan in motion, and immediately a gigantic cloud of dust streamed from underneath our car.

I have seen dust-raising cars, and I have sometimes been troubled with them when I could not get past, but I never saw anything like the cloud that flew from below this particular motor. It completely blotted out the car behind us, and I could well imagine the annoyance that the racer was experiencing. We went on like this for a mile or two, and then my chief ordered me to slow down gradually.

When we were almost at a walking pace he turned off the fan, and the dust subsided. The car behind and its occupant formed a terrible picture. The car itself was layered with dust, and so was the motorist, his lips being the only flesh coloured part of his whole face.

"Not bad," remarked Mr. Meldrum, "but I'm afraid the treatment is not sufficiently drastic in cases like that. I have six other cars like this, now being worked by agents in different parts of the country at the same game, but I'm afraid it will take us much too long to educate motorists after this fashion."

We kept it up for a few days more, however, getting in front of every car we saw exceeding the speed limit, and covering its occupants with dust.

Instead of doing good he appeared to make motorists as a body more reckless out of sheer cussedness. Car after car was fined for exceeding the speed limit, but the war was now being waged on organised lines and the central body was paying the fines.

"I am extremely sorry," said Mr. Meldrum to me one night, "but I'm afraid it's impossible to educate the motorist. I must simply exterminate him. I don't mean to kill the men, but merely to make it impossible for them to drive motors. When a man gets in a motor-car he loses everything that is gentlemanly in him, so we must abolish motors altogether."

The next day we drove out in a large motor-van, myself at the wheel and Mr. Meldrum inside the vehicle, standing beside piles of boxes each containing several hundreds of a wicked contrivance he had invented.

It consisted of four bars of iron about as thick as your finger, joined at the centre and sharp at the points. If you threw one of these things down it was bound to rest on three feet and have one point sticking up.

On the Brighton road he sprinkled these by-

the dozen till when we reached Reigate the van was empty. There he had arranged for a fresh supply to be waiting us, and after taking these aboard we proceeded to Brighton, doctoring the whole of the road in the same way.

That was on a Saturday afternoon, and during the whole of the week-end not one motor-car arrived in Brighton from London. On Monday the Motor Association sent out men to pick up all our tyre wreckers.

The newspaper proprietors and the M.P.'s were very angry, but everybody else was pleased, for the tyre wreckers could not damage anything but motor-car tyres. They stood so high from the ground that a horse would kick them over and not step on a sharp point, and if the narrow wheel of a cycle collided with one it simply upset the contrivance and passed safely over. This scheme was eventually spoiled by the fitting of small steel nets in front of the motor-cars, something like the cow-catchers on electric trams, and Mr. Meldrum had to think of a new idea.

"I believe," he said to me, "we should stop most of the abuses of motoring if we could break the nerve of the drivers. To come along at a terrific speed demands an iron nerve, and if this were once broken the speed limit would not be exceeded."

Within a couple of days he had a number of the most extraordinary vehicles you ever saw constructed. They were about the size of a child's tricycle, and they would go forward at a considerable speed when you had wound them up. On the front was fixed an arrangement of painted canvas that exactly represented the front of a motor-car, and at each side were two small lamps and in the centre a powerful head-light.

As soon as darkness had fallen we took one of the miniature motors and fixed it up inside a field, wound up the spring, and lit the lamps. We waited patiently for half-an-hour, and then from the top of the hill in front one of Mr. Meldrum's agents flashed a green lamp indicating that a scorching road hog was coming our way.

We put the contrivance on the wrong side of the road, pointed it dead for the oncoming car, and set it going.

I have no wish to experience the sensations the occupants of that car must have had. In the darkness our sham motor was exactly like a real one, and when it crashed into the scorchers they must have felt that it was a catastrophe in very truth.

Time and again we did this, breaking I daresay many a nerve, but Mr. Meldrum began to see that if the scorching motor swerved to one side we might cause an accident and loss of life, so he put on his thinking cap once again and at long last devised a means by which motors could be put in their proper place.

Over every road he had constructed what is called in most parts of the country a water-splash, which is a stream widened out and flowing over the road instead of under it by a bridge. Horses had no objections to going through, for the water cooled their feet, but the streams were sufficiently deep to spoil the ignition of motor-cars and to throw them out of action for a time.

Parliament and the motorists prepared for action, but the local authorities without exception supported Mr. Meldrum, and gladly allowed the water-splashes to be constructed at his expense.

Motoring was now brought to an absolute standstill, and he considered it time to present his ultimatum. This promised that the water-splashes would be abolished if the Motor Association and the motoring M.P.'s would undertake to introduce legislation to prohibit all dust-raisings cars from using the roads, and would guarantee to police motorists effectually, so that road hogs should be stamped out.

The motoring world was most unwilling to agree to such a proposal, but eventually they gave in, and once again Mr. Meldrum is able to drive his coach and four without discomfort.

Jack Ashore

"Hullo, old chap! Come and have a drink."

"You be off," replies the sailor, for he has heard of the wiles of the land shark; "I don't know you from Adam."

"Then aren't you Jack Smithers? I'd have sworn to it anywhere! But you are only fooling me, you know me well enough. I'm old Peter Williams."

The sailor is not Smithers, neither does he know Williams; but he looks the stranger up and down, feels convinced from his clothes that he is an honest working man, and agrees to accept the compliment of a drink.

He has one drink, then another, then several. Presently the desire to sleep overcomes all other feelings, Jack's eyes close, and he is blissfully unconscious of passing events till he wakes on the following morning.

His bed seems hard, and, twisting over, he sees that he is lying on the cobble stones of an alley. He scrambles to his feet, wonders whether the public-houses will be open, and puts his hand in his pocket. Then he discovers that his wages for the voyage, some £50, have taken wing.

* * * * *

This sailor is careful. He has surrendered himself to the care of one of the agents of a sailors' society; his money is banked at the office, and he is allowed to draw only a few shillings at a time. The regular shark leaves him alone, for a few shillings are not worth troubling about when there are men with anything up to £60 of wages in their pockets. But there are smaller practitioners.

"My dear," says the Jewish trader who has stationed himself at the foot of the steps of the sailor's temporary residence, "buy one of these lovely gold lockets for your sweetheart."

After all, what is money for? Jack thinks he might as well spend a bit, and so he agrees to purchase a half-crown locket for £2, only he has not so much money on his person. The Jew, however, is accommodating. Not only will he wait till to-morrow for payment, but he will even give the sailor a loan of £5 if he will sign a note for £7.

£5 would give a glorious spree, without the necessity of drawing more than usual and making the society officials shake their heads. Jack agrees, and every time he passes out of the house or into it the little Jew is there by the steps, waiting till Jack draws his balance, waiting also for fresh victims.

* * * * *

"Let me show you the way to the station and carry your luggage. It will only cost you a shilling."

The foreign sailor is delighted to hear himself addressed in his own tongue, for his knowledge of English is limited. True, his new-found friend speaks his language haltingly, but still it is understandable and seems homelike. London is a great unknown, and the foreign sailor is less trusting and childlike than his British counterpart.

The stranger leads him along, chatting about the sights, and the sailor's impression of London is not very favourable. He had no idea that the streets were so narrow and dirty.

He says so, and his guide tells him that he is taking him to the station by a near cut. Presently it is necessary for them to pass through a dark archway running beneath a house. When they are in the middle of it a door opens. Men dash out. Something strikes the sailor on the head. Next morning the papers briefly intimate that the body of a foreign sailor has been discovered in the river; there is the mark of a blow on the head, but probably that was caused by a barge.

J. M. CHAMBERS.

THE NEIGHBOURS.

SOME CANDID CRITICISMS.

I can't love them.

I am quite prepared, being a magnanimous man, to extend my best wishes to the heathen Chinee or any other person whose failings I am unacquainted with, but the neighbours I know too well.

They begin their kind attentions when you are born. When they see the happy announcement in the morning paper, or perhaps even when they observe the doctor's brougham at the door, they calculate the date when your parents were married—with what object they themselves best know.

In a few years' time, when you are a little boy, they take pains to observe your general deportment. If they see you transgressing any of the many laws which hem about the healthy exurberance of little boys, they report the facts to your parents, forgetting that their own children were robbing the same orchard, or ringing the same door-bells, as you were.

When you become a young man they watch you still more closely. It may be that you are busy during the day, and have to seek your exercise and recreation in the evening or at night.

The neighbours observe you as you set out for a walk. They note the time of your return. But they never attribute your nocturnal excursions to the innocent motives which prompted them.

You are seen coming home at twelve o'clock, after a visit to the theatre. The next time your attention is drawn to that particular evening is when you hear, through some kind and candid friend, that the neighbours are so sorry to observe that you are rapidly going to the bad.

Later on, when you start business, you will be foolish if you allow those you meet in commerce to know the opinions of your neighbours with regard to your credit.

Possibly you are a person without a single debt in the world, possibly you are the happy possessor of means more than adequate for the execution of any project you may have in hand; but the neighbours will continue to regard you as a light-weight in business as in all things else. Should you meet with any financial misfortune, they will say to one another with delicious self-assurance: "I told you so."

When you are married they will watch the ceremony with attention. It would be erroneous to suppose that their motive is to wish you and your bride well. Could you but hear them, you would discover that they are voicing not good wishes, but criticisms of the manner in which the ceremony is being carried out.

They see the furnisher's van call at your door with the red cloth, borrowed for the occasion, and they thank their good fortune that they are able to do without what they cannot afford to purchase.

When you start housekeeping you will find that the neighbours will endeavour to persuade your servants—if they are good ones—to leave you and go to them. This is a thing that no one would dream of doing to a stranger, but it is a perfectly legitimate action between neighbour and neighbour.

Your fowls annoy them by crowing in the early morning; your cat is the worst singer they have ever heard; your piano is a subject of public petition; the state of your garden is matter for adverse criticism; your children wonder why they are pitied.

The only blameless thing you can do in the eyes of the neighbours is to die.

When a death occurs they gather round in sympathy, but it remains an open question whether they do this out of benevolence, or whether their action is stimulated by a desire to play a leading part in an event which is to their minds melodramatic.

Certainly they do not blame the one who is dead, although they probably criticise his or her immediate relatives for unkindness, or, at the least, lack of attention. BENTLEY WILKINS.

River Poaching

One most cruel trick of his was that of catching fishes.—ANN TAYLOR.

The happy hunting ground of the river poacher is the Scotch salmon streams, and it would almost seem as if these rivers had been specially designed for the successful carrying on of this illicit business.

In some of them there are weirs, and across most there are dykes or waterfalls. The salmon, coming up from the sea to spawn, endeavours to dart up the torrent of water that dashes over these obstructions. Again and again it falls just as it has nearly made the ascent, till there is congregated at the bottom of the waterfall a perfect army of salmon, taking breath and resting for the next endeavour.

It is to such a place that the wily poacher betakes himself, nor does he wait for darkness.

THE PRACTITIONER'S PERSON.

You see an untidy figure—the visitor would imagine him to be simply an unemployed labourer—walking idly down the side of the stream. When he reaches the pool where the salmon are lying he glances hastily about him to see that none of the water baillies are about. Then from his coat pocket he draws a miniature grappling iron attached to a stout cord. The apparatus is of home manufacture, consisting simply of three large cod-hooks lashed back to back. Beneath the hooks is tied a small piece of lead to make their descent to the bottom quicker.

Holding the cord in one hand, and swinging the hook round his head with the other, he spins it dexterously to the far side of the pool, waits till it sinks, and then draws it in. If the hook touches the salmon the poacher knows it instantly, and jerks the cord sharply. Even if he merely drags across the pool without any such art, he can scarcely miss striking a fish.

Up comes the cord, a glistening salmon attached to it by the back fin. In a moment the poacher has knocked the fish on the head, has withdrawn his hook without lacerating the flesh unnecessarily, and has cut the mouth of the fish with his penknife to give the impression that it has been legitimately caught.

DISPOSING OF THE SPOIL.

How does he dispose of his catch? The angler can obtain a sovereign for a good fish, but in the case of the poacher the dealers are less generous.

In every Scotch town there is a dealer who takes the risk of selling poached salmon. The poacher goes to his shop when darkness has fallen, and draws from his overcoat pocket the stiff, smooth carcass of a salmon. The dealer glances at it hastily, decides in a moment whether the fish is too badly blemished to pass as rod-caught, and makes the poacher as low an offer as he is likely to accept—five shillings, possibly ten, never more.

Not infrequently the poacher finds a better market by disposing of his fish to some angler who is returning home with an empty bag. Sometimes he sells his catch to a local hotel-keeper.

He is seldom caught, for he and his friends carefully watch every movement of the water baillies, and unless they see him actually commit the crime, it is impossible to secure a conviction, for the people of the neighbourhood find it in their interest to sympathise with the poacher. Those who could give evidence against him, if they would, find from time to time a handsome fish upon their doorstep, and they are duly grateful, and sensitive of like favours to come.

Should the professional poacher be caught and convicted his fine will be a very heavy one, but it is usually paid by a secret organisation of which he is a member.

In most districts there is a river poachers' club, the men working in unity and paying into it all they earn from poaching. Fines are paid from this common fund, and from time to time throughout the season it is divided between the members of the club. It is not by any means uncommon for a poacher to find that his season's share amounts to £50.

There is a romantic form of salmon poaching practised most largely on the rivers of the north and west of Ireland. It is called "burning the waters," from the fact that blazing torches are carried.

WITH TORCH AND TRIDENT.

The poachers here work in a gang of six. Armed with torches, they betake themselves to a gravelly ford where the salmon go to deposit their spawn. The men wade boldly into the stream, and the fish do not dart off at their advance. Possibly the brilliance of the light stupefies them, and makes then fail to see the feet that are almost treading upon them; possibly the fish are actually attracted by the glare above them; anyhow they do not bolt.

The poachers are armed with a spear something after the fashion of a trident, but with only one bar on each prong, as two would blemish the fish when the spear is extracted. With these weapons raised aloft, and the flame of the torch reflected on the dark rippling water that laps their knees, the poachers peer closely down till they see the back of a salmon against the gravel below. Then there is a quick plunge, and up comes the wriggling body of the fish.

This method of poaching is much to be condemned, for it means the destruction of scores upon scores of breeding fish, and much injury to the spawn that has already been deposited.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE POACHERS.

Drag nets are not very frequently used by poachers, for, wherever there is a suitable ground for dragging, the baillies sink planks to which are affixed large iron hooks that effectually tear up the poacher's net. As good nets are costly, their loss is a consideration, and the poacher prefers less expensive methods.

It is impossible to have much sympathy with the ultra-scientific poacher, for he is a thief pure and simple and no sportsman. Into a good trout pool he will throw a quantity of quicklime or a gallon of ammonia. Either of these things will kill or stupefy the fish without making them unmarketable, and, as their bodies rise to the surface, the poacher rakes them in.

Tickling for trout is a much more delicate and attractive system. Here the poacher peers over the bank of the stream till he sees a trout resting at the edge, its head turned to the current and its tail moving gently.

Smearing his arm with clay or mud he lies flat upon the bank and gently dips his hand into the water. A white arm would scare the fish, but a muddy one is the same colour as the bank.

LANDING THE TROUT.

Even when the fish feels the fingers of the poacher touch its belly it does not move, for it imagines them to be pieces of weed. It is only when his thumb and first finger close quickly and tightly behind its gills that the fish makes a struggle to escape, when, of course, it is too late.

Some poachers who do not care for the discomfort of a wet and dirty arm, snare trout with a loop of properly darkened copper wire attached to a crooked stick. The stick is lowered gently into the water, and the trout does not appear to be alarmed, for it is well accustomed to seeing broken branches of trees floating about.

The loop is slipped over its head, there is a sudden jerk, and the fish finds itself wriggling on the bank.

DONALD MACGREGOR.

MY CAPTURES.

BY A RECRUITING SERGEANT.

The kind of chap I like to enlist is the one who means to do well by the Army and by himself. You might think my favourites ought to be those who are fired with martial ardour, and join the ranks for the glory of the thing, but I am sorry to say human nature isn't built that way; men mostly come to me because they are broke.

When occasion arises they are plucky enough, but they don't think about that sort of thing at the outset. Why should they? Fighting forms but a small part of the military career nowadays, and the majority of soldiers complete their time without even smelling a battle.

When a man is out of a job and hungry, the Army offers him a fresh start—if he can pass the doctor—and four out of five of my "clients" come to me because they know this. But there are others.

Not very long ago two young fellows called at my office and announced that they wanted to join a cavalry regiment.

They were very plainly, almost shabbily, dressed, but I could see from the way they spoke that they were gentlemen, but that was none of my business, and I enlisted them. They passed the doctor and joined the 17th Lancers.

Three months later one of them sent me a welcome little present and a letter thanking me for having assisted him and his friend to obtain a pleasant holiday. Just before the expiry of the first three months you can buy your discharge for £10, and this they had done. I can only say it isn't the sort of holiday I should choose, for the first few months are the hardest of your whole service.

We have always to be on the look-out for deserters, for they have a trick of re-enlisting under another name when they tire of their freedom.

Only the other week a well-set-up young man was looking at the placards outside my office door, and when I asked him if he wanted to join he said he did. But while I chatted with him he addressed me as colour-sergeant, and I therefore suspected he already knew more of the Army than he admitted.

I might have detained him on suspicion, but I hold that it's foolish to arrest deserters—the Army is well rid of those who want to leave it—and besides, this sort of police work doesn't appeal to me. So I pretended to find his eyesight deficient, and rejected him. I discovered shortly after that he went to another recruiting officer, who did not share my prejudices, and soon he was back with the colours, but not in the way he wanted.

Many a man enlists because the girl he likes won't have him, but it is something of a novelty to find the rejected lover making the Army serve his turn in Cupid's battle.

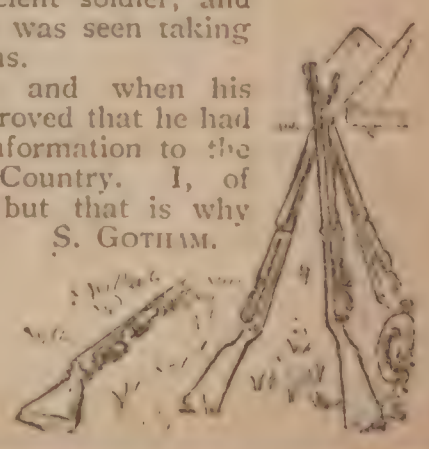
A youngster who took the shilling from me told me frankly that he was enlisting because his girl said "No." I wonder if he guessed what would happen? I'm sure I didn't. Within a week of his enlistment he had a letter from the now repentent maiden, saying that rather than have him killed she's marry him at once. He bought his discharge, and kept her to her word.

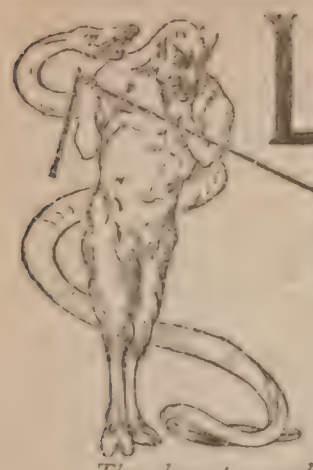
Working as I do in a London district, I frequently have applications from foreigners. We can take them on if they are naturalised, but a special enlistment order is needed. For my part, I always find some fault—even if there isn't one—in a would-be alien recruit, for I once had a sharp lesson.

A young German was duly enlisted through me, his naturalisation papers being in order. He proved a thoroughly efficient soldier, and all went well till one day he was seen taking photographs of some new guns.

The matter was reported, and when his papers were searched it was proved that he had for some time been selling information to the authorities of his Mother Country. I, of course, was not responsible, but that is why I bar aliens.

S. GOTHAM.





LONDON: HELL

III. BLACKMAIL.

Thou lowest scoundrel of the scoundrel kind,
Extract of all the dregs of all mankind.—SHERIDAN.

The most loathsome, base and cruel form of crime is blackmail. There is not even a shadow of romance to cover its sordidness. And yet there are degrees even in the baseness of blackmail.

Not very long ago a Chemnitz compositor named Paessler wrote to Mr. A. J. Balfour demanding £5,000 unless he wished some terrible misfortune to befall himself and his family. Mr. Balfour, of course, handed his communication to the police, and the blackmailer received the ridiculously light sentence of one month's imprisonment.

This case is typical of its class in that the implied threat is one of assassination. It is safe to say that many men would, like Mr. Balfour, immediately place such a communication in the hands of the authorities, but the lowest type of blackmailer makes, instead of a threat of murder, some vile insinuation as to the character of his victim, and many men who would risk the dagger dread the publicity which would be theirs should the matter be thrashed out in the courts.

KIND FRIENDS' OPINIONS.

We have a cursed proverb: "Where there is smoke there must be some fire," and, however innocent the victims may be, they know that their friends would sagely wag their heads, and trot out this ancient saw, should the matter become public.

It is a knowledge of this aspect of human nature that enables the most dastardly type of blackmailer to do his work. His favourite victims are bank clerks, and young men whose fathers have made gigantic fortunes and who will one day inherit them.

The blackmailer commences operations in a music hall, where he strikes up an acquaintance with a young man whom inquiries have led him to believe will prove a suitable victim. Continental critics have many times drawn attention to our insular stand-offishness, but in such a place as London it is scarcely possible to be too cautious with the affable stranger, and the more reserved a man is, the less chance is there of his being tormented by this particular type of scoundrel.

THE CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE.

The successful blackmailer is a person of good address and interesting conversation. He charms his victim by his comments on the performance and by his bright conversation.

The young man considers it fortunate that he should have made such an interesting acquaintance, and when they part that night he accepts the stranger's invitation to meet him at the same hall on some future occasion. Thus the acquaintanceship ripens into friendship. The respectability of the stranger appears to be unimpeachable; he is, in fact, just the sort of gentleman that the young man's mother would have him know, and possibly the young man may invite the stranger to his house to meet his people, but such an invitation is always declined on some pretext.

After fullest confidence has been established, the blackmailer invites his victim to accompany him for a week-end to Brighton. Here, as formerly, he is the best of companions, and also, as formerly, his moral rectitude is beyond reproach. He advises the young man, however, to say nothing about this expedition, and, without troubling to wonder why such a request should be made, the victim maintains silence.

Having allowed a few weeks to elapse, the blackmailer now sets to work in grim earnest. Supposing that his victim is a bank clerk he will write to him requesting a temporary loan, and out of friendship the money may be forthcoming. Then follows another demand and another, till at length the unhappy clerk has reached the end of his resources and is obliged to refuse.

The blackmailer's next communication is a threatening one. If the money is not forthcoming, he says in effect, he will disclose to the young man's father or to the manager of the bank information concerning the week-end at Brighton.

Now, when it is too late, the clerk sees his folly in having kept his Sunday jaunt secret, for his very silence concerning it lends colour to the vile insinuations of his tormentor, and so to close the mouth of his aggressor he obtains money from the Jews by mortgaging his prospects.

DRIVEN TO DESPAIR.

In time the money-lenders advance him to the limit of his security, but the blackmailer's demands only increase in magnitude, and the clerk is driven to embezzlement and forgery.

The process in regard to young men of property is in essence the same, and here you have the true explanation of many of those mysterious suicides which puzzle the reader of newspapers.

The victim's only chance of salvation is immediately to lay the facts before his employer or his father. Even if they refuse to believe that his version of the facts is the true one, if he is dismissed from his post or driven from his home, he will still have his life before him unshadowed by the continual menace of blackmail.

Another favourite trick of the blackmailer is to persuade a stranger to drink with him and to drug the liquor. A friend of mine who occupies an important position in an old-fashioned commercial house, had this very trick played upon him. The drug immediately produced all the symptoms of intoxication, though he had only drunk one glass, and he was consequently led off to Bow Street.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

The blackmailer's next move was to bail him out, and my friend returned to his work on the following morning little the worse for his adventure. A few days later, however, a letter reached him in which his late companion requested a loan, threatening that if it were not forthcoming he would disclose the escapade of that night to his employer.

My friend is not a man in his first youth, and he felt that if he lost his position the outlook for him would be serious. In his dilemma he applied to me for advice, and it was all I could do to persuade him to adopt the course I advocated.

I made him introduce me to his employer, and to the latter I explained the nature of the fraud that a wily rascal was endeavouring to spring upon him. Fortunately I succeeded in convincing the old merchant. We communicated with the police, a trap was laid, and it will be some few years till that particular scoundrel is again in a position to follow his calling.

THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD.

Family secrets are part of the blackmailer's stock-in-trade. If he can discover a scandal in connection with a wealthy or well-known person—perhaps some early indiscretion which has long been forgotten—he is prepared to pay well for it. In a little street which opens off Piccadilly there is a tavern much frequented by butlers and footmen, and here the blackmailer gleans much of his information.

It is not everyone who has the courage to follow the example of the great Duke of Wellington. A woman of his acquaintance threatened to publish certain letters of his unless he paid her a large sum of money. His reply was brief and to the point. "Polly," he wrote, "publish and be damned!"

The blackmailer who runs a financial paper finds the promoters of public companies his fattest game. Ernest T. Hooley, who made such a gigantic fortune when the cycle boom was at its height, once said: "I can hold my own with any financier, but there is one man who always beats me—the blackmailer." The sum he paid to blackmailers is said to have exceeded a quarter of a million.

FOSTERING CRIME.

The blackmailer reaps a golden harvest amongst his fellow criminals.

A doctor who was recently convicted of performing illegal operations, confessed that he had many years before been foolish enough to contravene the law in this respect. His crime had been discovered by a blackmailer, who had compelled him to continue his unlawful practices in order to get money with which to buy the greater villain's silence.

I recently had the satisfaction of attending a court of justice when one of these parasites was convicted and sentenced. He had been trapped very neatly. Encountering a burglar as the latter dropped over a wall, he threatened that he would hand him over to a policeman unless he were paid half the proceeds of the robbery.

The house-breaker pretended to be in great fear of arrest, and agreed to this demand, giving a name and address at which he invited the blackmailer to call on the following evening. The blackmailer duly presented himself, but the address was that of a highly respectable citizen who handed him over to the police.

A POLICE VICTIM.

Much has been said concerning the blackmail levied by the police, but little is known of the hush money which they themselves are obliged to pay. I once numbered amongst my friends a young constable who was rapidly rising in the service, and who astonished me greatly by informing me one evening that he had tendered his resignation and was on the point of setting out for Australia.

A little pressing elicited his reason. Shortly after he had joined the force, a man who appeared to be a bookmaker's tout, offered him a bribe which he was foolish enough to accept. A blackmailer, who had planned the whole thing, and who watched from concealment the transference of the money, then threatened the policeman with exposure.

For years the constable had paid him five shillings every week, and as his salary was increased the blackmailer's demands rose proportionately, making all hope of success impossible.

Women are seldom successful blackmailers when they work on their own, for they seem to lack that persistency which brings success in this nefarious line, but when they hunt with a male conspirator they accomplish wonders.

THE WOMAN.

One notorious character was known in the world of crime as Lady Sally, and it was her speciality to obtain a post as private secretary to some wealthy merchant.

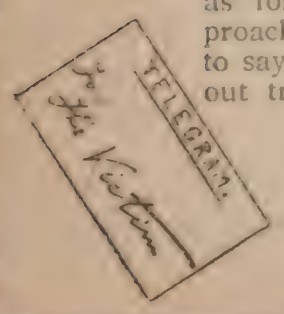
The nature of her duties frequently necessitated her being alone in the room with her employer, and some fine day she electrified her astonished chief by demanding money, and threatening that if he did not pay up she would declare that he had done her an injury.

Like other clever people, however, Sally overreached herself in time. A merchant whom she endeavoured to victimise refused to submit to her demands, and she was foolish enough to bring a civil action against him.

Fear for his reputation vanished before his indignation at the impudent manner in which she had endeavoured to trick him, and so he allowed the proceedings to go on. Sally failed under the cross-examination of a clever counsel, and her arrest and conviction for perjury followed in due course.

STUART FREEMAN.

[*A further article of this series will appear next week.*—ED.]



LUNCHING OUT

Feed me with food convenient for me.—SOLOMON.

To the fortunate man who can afford to spend a couple of shillings or half-a-crown, lunch in the city offers no difficulties; but the majority of workers can spare only sixpence or a shilling on their mid-day meal, and few of them manage to satisfy their hunger thoroughly or maintain their strength at this figure.

As a man who knows how to "do himself well" on little, let me offer them some useful hints.

Let us deal with the shilling-a-day luncher first. If he is inexperienced he will naturally rely on the advice of some of his older fellow workers. There is sure to be amongst the number at least one vegetarian crank who will lead him to a banquet of lentil pie, with an iron crust in which the proprietors of the place assure you there is no animal fat. On this and similar indelicacies you may stuff yourself for a penny or two less than your shilling, and you leave the restaurant without feeling invigorated but with all signs of hunger gone.

ABJECTS, ORTS AND IMITATIONS.

Two hours later you begin to discover an aching void, and presently you feel as if you would like to set office discipline at defiance and make for the nearest baker's to buy a bun.

That is what a vegetable diet always does. It sits on your chest for a couple of hours, and then leaves you ravenous. Probably you'll try it once, but that only.

Another alternative is to invest in a table d'hote luncheon, consisting of three courses or more. This is equally inadvisable. A French restaurateur can serve up a three course lunch for a shilling and have each dish made from none but the best materials, but the feat is outside the present abilities of the English provider.

If he gives you three courses for your shilling, he is selling you the lowest quality of meat and the cheapest fish, neither of which can do you any good, and both of which are fully capable of making you seriously ill.

The third of the methods usually adopted by the shilling man is to patronise a restaurant where a small steak can be had for ninepence, potatoes for twopence, and a penny be left for the waiters.

FEEDING IN A PUB.

Here again the meat will be inferior, though not the worst, and the vegetables will be wet and tasteless. The meal will be better than the multiple-course one, but it will still be poor value.

The only place where you can get a sound meal for a shilling is in a public-house. It may not seem such a respectable place to lunch in as the semi-fashionable restaurant, but the food supplied by the average pub. is of the best quality, and in quantity to suit the greediest.

A plate of roast beef or mutton, two vegetables, bread and cheese can be had in most public-houses for a shilling, and some even supply a glass of ale free with the meal.

Here then is a lunch that does more than stop the pains of hunger; it gives you fresh vigour for your afternoon's duties, and helps to build up your general health.

Many men have never thought of lunching in a pub. "All the other fellows go to So-and-so's," and they lack the initiative to strike out for new and better fields.

Some are teetotalers and avoid the pub. lest they should appear odd where everyone else is drinking. That is mere self-consciousness. The landlord will consider "the good of the house" fairly dealt by if you order a bottle of soda-water, and in many pubs. the lunchers are not expected to order any liquid refreshment at all unless their fancy prompts them.

Let us now review the case of the man to whom sixpence is the limit in the way of lunch money. In most cases, especially if he is a clerk, he will patronise a tea-shop.

A cup of tea, 2d.; a roll and butter, 2d.; a microscopic helping of rice-pudding or a small cupful of soup, 2d.; that is how he invests his money.

A poorer diet, or one better calculated to insure the rapid degeneration of the individual and the race, it is hard to conceive. The man who takes such a meal can have none of the joys of eating—great and legitimate pleasures they may be made—and he is handicapping himself in his struggle for business success, a thing that only the vigorous and well-nourished ever attain.

Where then is he to go?

If he can afford to spend only the same amount as a working-man, let him do as the working-man does. Let him patronise one of those restaurants which bear a placard, "Good Pull-up for Carmen."

THE PLACE FOR SIXPENCE.

There he will get a steak pudding of the best quality for threepence; potatoes, a penny; cabbage, a penny; bread a penny. A plate of prime roast beef is fourpence, and so on. He cannot have a banquet, served as a banquet should be, for sixpence, but he can have a meal that is wholesome, palatable and nourishing.

Compare the physique of the average working-man with that of the clerk. Here, I am convinced, you have at least one cause of the former's superiority.

There is nothing genteel (a ghastly word!) in grubbing at one of these starvation tea-shops, nor is there anything degrading in sitting at a deal table or in fetching your helping from the counter.

It may be that your office mates would look down on you for lunching at a "pull-up," and there is no reason why you should run counter to the opinions and prejudices of those you are in daily contact with. The way out of such a difficulty is simply to make a practice of lunching alone; don't say where you go, if saying it would injure you, but patronise the place which one visit will convince you is the best.

THE VERY CHEAPEST.

There is still a cheaper way of lunching, and a satisfactory one withal. At a "pull-up" it is not considered infra dig. to order a penny cup of tea or coffee, and thus secure the right to a seat at a table. You can then eat in comfort the lunch which you have brought with you from home. This is bringing things to rock-bottom economy, for all but the tea is at absolutely cost price. Moreover you will not feel out of it, for many of your fellow-diners will be doing precisely the same thing.

The great thing is to suit your lunch to your circumstances, and to see that you have a thoroughly good meal. If appearances must go hang, let them. Your health and the maintenance of your vigour come before all things.

WM. THOMPSON

DRY TOBACCO.

Those readers who buy their tobacco in packets must frequently have experienced the annoyance of finding it in too dry a condition.

Should you attempt to fill your pipe with tobacco that is very dry it crumbles to dust between your fingers, and it smokes hot. In the case of the various navy cuts, where the tobacco has to be rolled between the hands before it can be smoked at all, dryness is particularly annoying, for the money you have spent is wasted.

The remedy is here. When you have put the tobacco in your pouch, sprinkle a few drops of water upon it and replace the pouch in your pocket. The heat of your body will vaporise the water and moisten the tobacco. If you have not wetted it sufficiently, repeat.

There is no quicker way of compassing this end. If you place the moistened tobacco near a fire to make the water steam through it more quickly, you injure the flavour.

HORSEY STORIES.

SOME EQUINE ANECDOTAGE.

The pathetic sight of a horse that has fallen in the street arouses the sympathy of the most careless observer, but it is doubtful whether the animal is on such occasions taking such a black outlook on life as it appears to do. Recently a London cab horse bolted, dashed into Lincoln's Inn, smashed through some railings, and hung upon them suspended over an area, with its fore feet dangling down into space.

Apparently recognising that it could not extricate itself unaided, it determined to make the best of things, and began to nibble some grass at the other side of the area which it could now just manage to reach by stretching its neck. Eventually it was hoisted out by means of ropes and an improvised crane

This horse had a sense of humour, but scarcely equal to that possessed by a pony belonging to a friend of the writer's. This little Shetland is the pet of the owner's children, but not by any means the pet of the gardener, who resents the freedom allowed to it in roaming the grounds at will.

Under the trees there is a good deal of grass which nobody objects to its having, but it likes best of all a meal of roses, and to get this it chooses a time when the gardener is in sight but a good way off.

Then it advances to the rose-bed and begins to munch the blooms; the man dashes up, but the pony continues eating very innocently till the lord of the roses is almost upon him. Then he trots off, so slowly that the gardener is tempted into pursuit in order to administer the necessary chastisement. The pony keeps just a yard or two in front, and sometimes circles round his pursuer.

When the gardener is out of breath and gives up the chase, the pony approaches him from behind and taps him on the back with its nose. Sometimes it varies this game by hiding in a shrubbery, waiting till the gardener's hand is almost upon him, and then bolting like lightning to be found again somewhere else.

The Shetland never seems to weary of this game, for he plays it day after day, the gardener falling an easy victim every time.

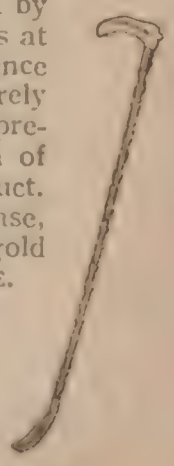
The homing instinct is not the exclusive property of pigeons, dogs, and cats, for some horses possess it in a marked degree. A farmer at Turvey, Bedfordshire, recently sold a horse to a farmer at Hanslope. The horse was removed to his new quarters, but, as soon as darkness fell, he leapt the fence of the field in which he had been put, and made tracks across country for his old home, covering over a dozen miles and leaping ditches and fences on his way. His old owner found him grazing quietly in his accustomed paddock next morning.

These beautiful characteristics are not the only ones possessed by man's best friend. Otto Madden is not likely to forget how he was savaged on the Brighton course by Marigold IV. He was cantering along on Centre, and as he passed Marigold IV that horse seized him by the arm, dragged him from the saddle, picked him up and shook him like a rat.

Brady, the jockey on Marigold IV, leapt to the ground and endeavoured to beat him off. By this time the horse had Madden by the throat, and, had it not been for Brady's pluck, would undoubtedly have killed him. As it was, the horse now turned on Brady, who deftly leapt into the saddle and after a stiff fight succeeded in bringing his mount to the post, only to find that the starter refused to allow such a dangerous animal to run.

The famous Fred Archer was once seized by the arm and very badly bitten by Muley Edris at Newmarket, being unable to ride in consequence for many weeks afterwards. He had severely punished Muley Edris in a race some time previously, and it was probably the recollection of this fact that accounted for the horse's conduct. There was no such reason in Madden's case, however, as he had never given the Marigold any cause of offence.

NORMAN CHEYNE.



THE PLAGUE OF DOGS.

COMPLETE SHORT STORY.

By J. W. BURNETT.

"There's another on 'em," remarked the cook to the coachman, as a faint scratch-scratch sounded at the kitchen door. "Upon my word, if it wasn't for the good wages and the beer money I'd chuck up this place, straight. It's dogs, dogs everywhere."

William, the coachman, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

"I can sympathise with you there, Mary," he said; "why, they've overflowed now to the stable, and I believe Miss Abernethy will be selling off her horses one of these days to make room for more dogs."

At this moment the door opened, and Alice, the housemaid, entered the kitchen. She turned her back upon the coachman, raised the front of her skirt, and began vigorously to rub her shin.

"Drat 'em dogs," she said, "there's one on 'em lying on the stairs as I come down in the dark, and I'm blest if I didn't fall over him. If it wasn't for the sake of the postman," she continued, "I'd leave to-morrow."

"It seems to me," remarked William, "that some steps ought to be taken to do away with this plague. It's no use argifying with Miss Abernethy. I mentioned the other day that she had already more dogs in the stable than there was room for, and she told me to mind my own business. We must try and force her to give them up. If she only would, what a delightful place it would be!"

When William returned to the solitude of the harness-room, he lit his pipe and meditated. Presently his face lit up with the capture of an idea, and he hastened back to the kitchen.

"I say, Mary," he said in a hoarse whisper, "does Miss Abernethy lock her bedroom door at nights?"

"That she doesn't," replied the cook.

"Then I have a scheme," said William. "Just when eleven o'clock strikes, open the back door and let me in."

Mary was at first horrified, but, the respectability of William being unimpeachable, she at length consented. At eleven that night William presented himself at the back door, leading by a string a sheep-dog with long hair and a very, very strong smell.

"Is the old girl in bed?" he asked.

"'As been this hour," said Mary.

"Then," said William, "lead the way."

Miss Abernethy was a maiden lady with very exact ideas on certain matters. She could not tolerate creaking shoes or creaking stairs, for example, and every step had been padded under the carpet with a little cushion of feathers.

This came in useful now, for, as William and Mary ascended the stairs towards her bedroom, there was never the sound of a footfall. When they reached the door of the room, William gently turned the handle, pushed the sheep-dog inside, and closed it behind him. Then they departed.

Exactly what happened the conspirators had no way of immediately finding out, but in the morning Miss Abernethy described to Mary the adventures of the night. It appeared that she had just finished her beauty sleep, and was on the point of turning over, when she became aware that there was something warm in bed beside her.

She was sure at first that it must be a burglar, so she stretched out her hand towards a table beside her bed, on which she kept a revolver. Her fingers had already grasped the butt of the weapon, and she was about to use it, when it suddenly struck her that no man she had ever met, not even the dustman, had quite such a strong smell. Before shooting the intruder dead, therefore, she determined to have another look.

The sleeper was breathing heavily, but Miss Abernethy's movements must have awakened him, for just at the critical moment he turned upon her a pair of eyes which shone greenly in the half-light.

"Upon my word!" said Miss Abernethy. "It's a dear, dear doggy, but however he has got in here I don't know."

She got up, took the quilt from her bed, made a nest with it in one corner of the room, placed the intruder therein, covered him up, emptied her scent bottle over the bed to take away the smell of him, and returned to her slumbers.

In the morning she made inquiries as to how the dog had come there, but apparently none of the servants could enlighten her, and she had to remain content with Mary's suggestion that it must have strayed into the room when she herself entered.

Miss Abernethy ordered the boy who cleaned the knives and boots to wash the newcomer in two distinct waters and with two separate kinds of soap, and, when he had been thoroughly dried before the fire in the breakfast room, she took him out to the stable and requested William to find room for him there.

"This is cutting a stick for my own back," said William at the first opportunity to Mary, "but I ain't done yet."

That night Mr. William Coles betook himself to the dogs' home, where he got the sheep-dog the previous night, and where he now had a special interview with the manageress. He informed that lady that, owing to the number of his acquaintances, he could provide kind homes for any number of dogs. The funds of the dogs' home were not in a very flourishing condition, so she availed herself delightedly of his offer, and William returned home, holding in each hand three strings, to the other ends of which were attached three dogs, making six.

He knew something about dogs did William, and during the afternoon he supplied the housemaid with a small bottle of aniseed, which she had smeared liberally upon the floor just inside the door of Miss Abernethy's bedroom.

As soon as that lady retired to rest, the dogs were brought into the house and conducted to her door. There was no need to open it. They smelt the aniseed and scratched lustily upon the panels.

Miss Abernethy got up to investigate matters, and the six dogs trooped into her bedroom. One was a large collie, which almost upset her in the exuberance of his greeting.

Miss Abernethy spent the greater part of the next day in making friends with the seven strangers, the thirteen which she already had being taken for their daily walk by the knife boy.

One of the new dogs was to have the dining-room sofa, one an armchair in the drawing-room, one was little and could sleep in the dirty linen basket, William had to find accommodation for one more in the stable, and Mary and Alice were each required to accommodate one in their respective bedrooms.

"Beer money or not," said Mary to William that night, "I'm going to chuck it."

"Just wait another day or two," replied William. "I'm bringing eight to-night."

And to this Mary and Alice agreed. It was just as well he had exacted the promise of patience from them at that time, for when they retired to their rooms they discovered that their fellow-lodgers had not been very well brought up, and were not over clean. Mary did not discover the sins of her particular pet till she had taken off her shoes and stockings, and she was very angry.

As the servants came down next morning they were met on the stairs and in the passages by William's fresh batch of mongrels. When Alice took in Miss Abernethy's cup of tea, the eight followed her dutifully into the bedroom, and the intrusion was naturally resented by the sheep-dog, which now regarded this apartment as his own.

He seized the first-comer by the throat and laid him in the fender. The others, frightened at his ferocity, sought refuge in various places. One leaped upon the washstand and upset the water-jug; a second jumped on the dressing-table and knocked down Miss Abernethy's one-and-tenpenny bottle of hair restorer; another got on top of the drawers; three leaped on the bed, causing Miss Abernethy to upset the tea, which was uncomfortably warm; while the seventh gave battle to the sheep-dog, and the eighth struggled in the fender, making a terrific clatter with the fire irons.

Miss Abernethy would have got up to separate the combatants, but the three dogs on the bed refused to move, and the good lady was helpless. Presently, however, the sheep-dog chased its antagonist downstairs, and when it had left the room the valiant mongrels were coaxed from their places of safety, and Miss Abernethy got up.

"It beats me," she remarked to her looking-glass, "where all the dogs come from. I suppose their owners object to paying the poor things' licenses, and take them out and lose them. Anyhow, their coming to me is a compliment which I appreciate, and I shall keep them all so long as I have a roof above me and a crust of bread to share with them."

And Miss Abernethy's shoulders heaved with the pathos of the situation.

Plans were then made for the accommodation of the eight new arrivals, and most of them were drafted upon William, who determined on instant and decided action.

Setting forth on evil intent, he laid felonious hands upon a beautiful pomeranian which was sunning itself on a neighbour's doorstep. Clutching it under his arm, he dashed back to the house, and let it in at the back door. It mingled with the crowd of strangers, and its white coat instantly won a warm corner in Miss Abernethy's heart.

Meanwhile William was in earnest consultation with Mary, the cook, and as a result Mary beckoned to her favourite policeman, who was standing on the other side of the road.

"Go round to number three," she said, "and see if they've had a dog stolen. If they have come here and get it, the missis has it. Don't run her in, but give her a good fright, and, my own dear Bobsy-wobsy, do tell her that it's illegal for her to keep more than one dog."

Robert did as requested, and half-an-hour later he was holding a solemn interview with Miss Abernethy in her dining-room.

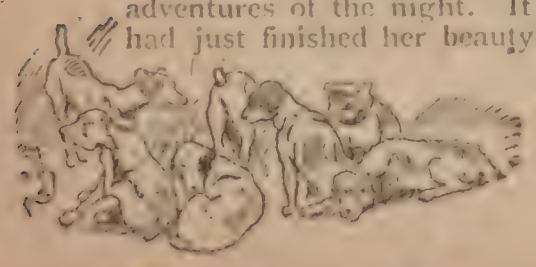
Miss Abernethy, on the verge of tears, returned the pomeranian, tipped Robert handsomely, and summoned William for a consultation.

That night William, Mary, Alice, and the knife boy conducted the twenty-eight dogs to the dogs' home, placed them inside the gate, gently closed it, and came away.

When they returned home they were just congratulating one another upon the happy result of their plots, when they heard a terrific mewing from the dining-room.

Stealing in, they lit the gas and investigated. Miss Abernethy, deprived of her dogs, had sent to the local dealer for a cat and a litter of kittens.

"This is the last straw," said Mary, "I'm off!"



How to Enjoy Walking.

The first thing to do is to get the feet into condition. Many a man has dropped walking in disgust after finding that a ten mile tramp blisters his feet; the fault is not in the exercise but in his lack of preparation.

The walker's feet should be hard, and to get them to this state there is nothing equal to walking itself.

If you contemplate having a walking tour, either for a week-end or for a more extended holiday, walk four or six miles every evening for at least a fortnight before. This will harden your feet, besides putting the muscles into proper condition.

Feet may be hardened still further by rubbing them at night with methylated spirit, or with vinegar and water. Foot-powders are useful, but they must be properly dusted over the feet and into the socks and not allowed to accumulate between the toes, for otherwise they themselves will cause that irritation they are intended to prevent.

Few things are better than common yellow soap. If this is rubbed on the socks and inside the boot, freedom from blisters is assured, unless the feet are in a very tender condition indeed.

CURING A BLISTERED HEEL.

Should you be unlucky enough to get a blistered heel, the pleasure of your holiday will suffer greatly unless you cure the injury at once. I know of just one way of making a speedy cure. Buy from a chemist a pennyworth of antiseptic cotton wool. When you go to bed soak half the wool in cold water and lay it on your heel; on top of it put the dry wool, and tie the lot in place with a handkerchief.

This has very much the same effect as a poultice, drawing out the inflammation, and leaving you with a heel that is practically sound by morning; but it has the advantage over a poultice that it does not make the surrounding skin tender.

I advise walkers to carry in their pocket a small bottle of liquid court plaster, which will be found very useful for doctoring a blister after the inflammation has been drawn out of it in the way I have mentioned.

Wet boots are the most prolific cause of sore feet. On one occasion, before I knew as much about the matter as I do now, I was tramping through the Lake district on a hot summer day. I did not know then how to get my feet into condition, and they were painful; so when I came to a little stream I sat me down upon the bank and held my feet over the side so that the water just lapped the top of the soles.

As my boots became cold I experienced great refreshment, and I continued the process till the water began to find its way inside the boots themselves.

REFRESHMENT—AND THE RESULT.

My feet now became delightfully cool, but when I reached my stopping place that night each of them had about half-a-dozen blisters. Bathe your feet after the day's work by all means, but don't bathe your boots.

The choice of boots is important. Avoid those made of chrome leather, which instead of being tanned is cured by the infusion of sulphuric acid. When your feet sweat in such boots as these, the acid is drawn out, and torture is your portion. These boots look very soft and comfortable, but they are deceivers.

The chief thing is to get boots which have fairly thin uppers but stout soles, and I recommend that they be of good quality, in order that they may be repaired again and again, for the best boots for walking are old favourites that have been tried many times and found right.

To walk in a pair of new boots is to court disaster. For wet weather, and a walk is never more pleasant than when the roads are soft, you will be wise to pour a little oil round the top of the welts, so that water may be prevented from forcing its way in where the sole joins the upper.

In the matter of socks avoid those that have a seam anywhere about the sole of the foot, and leave thin socks for those who merely stroll. A thick woollen sock, to act as a cushion between the foot and the sole of the boot, is a necessity for the walker who covers long distances.

The rest of your attire may be left to taste, for it is chiefly the feet and the clothing thereof that are concerned in this particular exercise. Some men prefer to wear flannel trousers, others riding breeches; some swear by woollen undervests and some by linen mesh; all, however, are agreed that soft collars are the only comfortable neckwear for the purpose.

It is just as well, by the way, to wear a belt instead of braces when walking, as the latter tend to fatigue the shoulders, which get tired quite soon enough in any case.

FOR RAINY WEATHER.

In making a walking tour of any duration, you must in our delightful climate be prepared for a breakdown in the weather. I have known men carry a raincoat hundreds of miles in order to guard against a possible shower. For my own part I either carry a cycling cape, of thin material, but reaching to my knees, or else I trust to luck and to the shelter of a hospitable farmhouse in the event of being caught in the rain. Carrying things is a nuisance to the walker, and I am much inclined to favour the latter method.

When you set out deliberately to walk in the rain, however, you must protect yourself. A thin shower-proof coat or a cycling cape and a pair of leggings make you as weather-proof as you need be.

Should you ever be unfortunate enough to get a thorough soaking, keep moving till you reach some place where you can go to bed while your clothes are being dried. Do not on any account under such circumstances take a railway journey to the town you intend to make your destination, for to sit still with wet clothes is to invite serious and permanent trouble.

When you strip, rub a little whisky over your knees. It is generally there that you get wet, and the spirit will counteract the otherwise disastrous effects of the chill.

What about luggage on a walking tour? I recollect walking for a mile or two once with a fellow wayfarer who had been supplied with every possible requisite by some enterprising athletic outfitter. On his back he had slung a knapsack, which contained a pair of slippers, three pairs of socks, a dozen handkerchiefs, a cake of soap, hair brushes, a spare pair of trousers in case he got wet, and even a volume of his favourite author. Above the knapsack he had rolled up a large macintosh.

BAGGAGE.

His conversation was chiefly about the bad condition of the roads and the uncomfortable warmth of the weather. For my part I had not observed either of these faults, but then I was not carrying volumes of favourite authors and other impedimenta.

For my part I can get along comfortably with the following necessaries: a toothbrush, one handkerchief, a thin cake of soap, and a small comb. For other things I am ready to trust to the cleanliness of the hotel-keeper, but I refuse to wash my face or brush my hair with the articles which he supplies, and which may have been previously used by some less healthy guest.

If you wash your handkerchief each night and hang it over your looking glass, it will be dry in the morning and clean though unironed. It may not seem quite so dainty as one freshly unpacked, but it does away with the humbug of carrying a supply of handkerchiefs.

You can sleep very comfortably in the shirt you have worn during the day, provided you take it off, shake it about well, and remove your undervest before putting the shirt on again; this dispenses with the need of providing pyjamas.

As for a change of underwear and socks, I can always do with a little addition to my stock, and so I take the opportunity when I am on a walking tour of buying fresh supplies, and posting home my dirty things. If you follow this scheme, let me advise you not to buy socks that are heavily dyed, as the dye will come out with the sweat of your feet and possibly cripple you for a time; choose those of a grey colour.

If you do not care for this system of increasing your wardrobe as you go along, and consequently increasing the expenses, you might have a fresh supply of clothes posted to you either at the hotel you intend to put up at, or, if you do not know of a good hotel, at the post office of a town where you are to pass a night. The main thing is to avoid carrying about unnecessary luggage.

WALKING STICKS.

Should you, or should you not, take a walking stick? Before deciding, watch how you use your stick. If you carry it horizontally or swing it about, leave it behind, for it is merely extra weight; but if you actually use it to assist you in walking, it will be of considerable help.

Teach yourself, however, to use it with your left hand as well as with the right, so that you may thus relieve each leg alternately.

Don't bother about style in walking. The best style for you is that which you find easiest. Much nonsense has been written about turning out your toes and throwing back your head.

The tramp slouches along with a minimum of effort, and the native carrier covers his miles with much less fatigue than the soldier with his military carriage. An erect position looks very nice, and, if you find that it does not hinder you or tire you, adopt it. Otherwise leave it alone.

To enjoy your walk to the full you must eat wisely. Dieting is unnecessary, but it is just as well not to have too heavy a feed in the middle of the day.

Bread, cheese, and a glass of beer are hard to beat, but avoid stout or any liquor that is likely to make you sleepy. Let evening be the time for your heavy meal, for then you will be thoroughly fit for it, and no exertion will be demanded after it.

HOTEL EXPENSES.

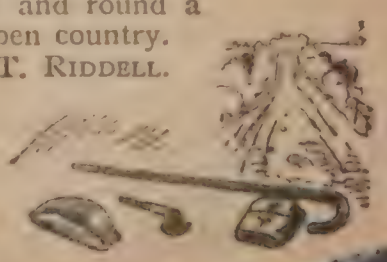
Talking of grub reminds me of hotels. Possibly you are a Croesus and don't worry about expense; if so, we differ. I hate paying heavily for accommodation, and hate equally putting up in an uncomfortable place. If I don't know of a cheap and good hotel, I give a policeman twopence and ask his advice. The police will always put you right in this matter.

If you are lucky enough to have a good companion, so much the better; but it is not always easy to find a friend who is free at the same time as yourself. If you are obliged to walk alone, do not be above scraping an acquaintance with a fellow wayfarer, whether he be a holiday-maker or a tramp. There is something to be learned from everybody, and even indifferent company is better than none.

The man who makes walking a habit should endeavour to acquire some knowledge of botany and natural history generally. He might even study the elements of geology, and local antiquities have their meed of entertainment to yield.

Attention to these things helps to increase the interest of a walk; without observation you might as well be walking round and round a football pitch as traversing the open country.

T. RIDDELL.



THE MUSCULAR MILLIONAIRE.

A PORTRAIT.

The older writers give us a picture of the business man which is not now true to life. They paint him as lean-cheeked, pasty-skinned, tall and thin; they make him inhabit an office that is uncomfortable and dusty; they represent him as something of a miser.

Doubtless this was a true portrait fifty years ago, but the successful business man of to-day is a different person. He spends his money freely and his office is just as comfortable as the upholsterer can make it.

But the greatest difference lies in the physique. The business man of the present time is something of an athlete. I am not speaking of our older millionaires, or of the old clerks who are to be found in most offices; they are the men of yesterday. I take it that the successful business man of to-day is somewhere between thirty and forty. If he falls over or under that period, I should term him as belonging to yesterday or to-morrow as the case may be.

Here is a rough portrait of an enormously successful man with whom I am well acquainted. His age is thirty-five, his height about the average, his face red with health.

At the first glance he would strike you as fat, but every inch of him is muscle, as you may see by his walk.

An employee of his once told me a little bit of gossip about him and finished up with the caution: "Mind you don't repeat this, or it will get to his ears."

"If it did," I said, "he'd probably sack you."

"I'm not afraid of that," was the answer, "for I could get as good a job. What he would do would be to come straight to this room and knock me down. That's the type of man he is, and, what's more, he could do it easily."

Such then is one of our rising millionaires. It must not be supposed from what I have said that he is anything of a bully; on the contrary he is invariably courteous, addressing every man under him as Mr. So-and-so, a kindly consideration which is not usual in a London office.

Sometimes the pressure of business necessitates that half the staff shall stop after six o'clock. He has but to request it, and the thing is done. Each of the employees would do anything for sheer love of him.

Whence comes this great personal respect? Partly, doubtless, from his courtesy, but most largely from his physical power. A man expects his boss to be more clever than he is, and he does not necessarily respect him for his ability. But when he also knows that his employer is twice as strong physically as any other man in the office, he begins to stand in awe of him, and later on that feeling turns to complete admiration.

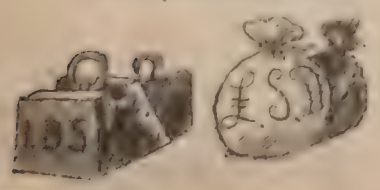
Who shall say how much he owes to this fidelity on the part of his staff?

How has this physical fitness been gained? In the case I have in mind it has been studiously acquired, as the man recognised it years ago as one of the elements of financial success. He early formed a friendship with one of the promoters of the present physical culture movement, and from him he received many hints which are not given to the strong man's ordinary students.

He has taken up such sport as his purse could compass—in the early days football and swimming, now riding, golf and motoring. Moreover he does not grudge these things two complete days each week. Saturdays he always takes, and generally Tuesday or Wednesday as well. So perfect is his office organisation that the work goes on with absolute smoothness in his absence.

"My physical strength has done much for me in business," he once confessed. "In my younger days when I had a subordinate job and many bosses, I found that they were afraid to bully me and afraid to refuse any reasonable request, just because I looked as if I could crumple them up."

HAMMOND MILLS.



MY NOTEBOOK.

RATTING AT NIGHT. A farmer friend of mine with whom I recently spent a brief holiday showed me a new method of ratting which was as novel as sporting.

Our equipment was a mongrel terrier and an acetylene bicycle lamp. I wondered what the light was for, and imagined it might be intended to lure the rats from their hiding places. The idea struck me as being like the traditional one of sprinkling salt on their tails, but events proved my surmises incorrect.

We made our way down the side of a hedge at the edge of a field where the corn had recently been cut. The terrier followed at our heels with never a bark or a whimper. When we had got half way down the hedge we stopped, turned, and advanced into the field itself. Then my friend removed the lamp from a cardboard box he had been carrying it in to keep it from being seen, and flashed it about over the stubble.

Here and there we could see the rats blinking at us. They had gone out to feed on the grain that had fallen, and they seemed more surprised than alarmed at the interruption of their meal.

The terrier polished off six, and, I should think, twice that number escaped back to the hedge. Then we boxed the lamp, advanced quietly till we reached the other end of the field and were between the hedge and a fresh batch, when we went through the same performance again. I am afraid it was not a very deadly method of rat catching, for in the darkness a great number escaped. There was, however, a novelty about the sport which was pleasing, and if we had had a couple of dogs I believe we should have done very well.

SPORTS FOR THE UNDEVELOPED. The man who takes up sport only late in life finds it hard to discover some form of recreation in which his lack of muscle will not tell seriously against him. There are, however, several sports in which the man of undeveloped physique stands as good a chance as anybody else.

In rowing, jumping, and sprinting, for example, success comes not to the man with big muscles, but to him who can successfully apply the force that is in him; stamina, skill, and agility are much more important in these sports than mere strength.

Of games it would be possible to make out a long list where muscular development is unnecessary. Cricket, golf, quoits, and tennis all require skill rather more than strength.

The man who has neglected athletics is therefore left without the excuse that it is too late now to begin.

THE NEED FOR NEW THINGS. Here is a little fact of life which for many years I wot not of, but the expounding of which may save my readers disappointment: What pleased yesterday will not please to-morrow.

Take the play you thought so good five years ago. It has not been staged since, but you feel certain that if any manager would speculate in reviving it he would secure an immense fortune. The manager knows better, because the experiment has been made. The play may be restaged with a better setting and better actors, but it will fail to catch either your fancy or that of the general public.

It is the same with books. A novel which you thought perfect at the first reading, shows many weak spots at the second.

The truth is that surprise plays a large part in interest, and novelty in pleasure. To enjoy a thing to the full is difficult when you already know all about it. Instead therefore of sticking to old things when they have ceased to charm, one should pitch them overboard; they are but ballast when the mind has absorbed the gist of them. Clear them out and make room for fresh intellectual cargo. Only by the creation of new interests can the mind be kept bright and capable of its highest enjoyment.

BICYCLE LAMPS. A friend of mine has just given up acetylene lamps in disgust. He says they are a nuisance to fill and clean, that they are unreliable, and that they are expensive to keep up. He has gone back to candles.

For my own part I should be sorry to do without an acetylene lamp under certain conditions. It costs more, both for itself and its supplies, than either an oil or a candle lamp, but it gives a brilliant light which is worth paying for. A hot, dusty Saturday afternoon is not the only time—not perhaps the best time—for enjoying a cycle run. Nothing can be nicer after a hard day's work than a quiet spin out of the city and into the dark lanes of the country, but for cycling on a dark and unknown road I think a brilliant light is a necessity.

THE WANDERING COW. I remember once cycling along with nothing better in front of me than a feeble oil flame, when suddenly I saw looming ahead the gigantic form of a cow. It was being driven out of a field, and with bovine deliberation was pausing broadways-on across the road. I applied both brakes, and nearly sent myself over the handlebars in consequence. There was no actual catastrophe, but I thought then that the danger would not have existed had I been using a brighter light. Next day I bought an acetylene, and I have used it since.

To get the best out of an acetylene lamp you should get one of fair quality and not, as you may be tempted to do, the very cheapest. The second point is not to put in much carbide at a time, and to replenish the holder for each journey. An acetylene lamp that was used yesterday may on being lit to-day give a satisfactory flame, but it is not likely to last. In any case put an air-tight tin with an ounce or two of carbide in your tool-bag.

For those who are riding short distances only, to and from work for instance, I should say that an acetylene lamp was unnecessary and troublesome. Where you do not require illumination but merely a light sufficient to comply with the police regulations, a candle lamp is as good as any.

CROWDS. I have often wished that some professor of mental science would investigate and write about crowds. Authors have attempted to do it many times, but it seems to me that they lack the necessary information.

The other evening I attended a political meeting at which the orator gave arguments that were wholly illogical. I suppose I saw through the falsity of them because his political outlook was not the same as my own, but almost everybody else must have been with him, for the crowd was all but unanimous in its approval of him. He was making the assertions which they wanted to hear, and I should have been perfectly satisfied had he made them boldly; but it struck me as absurd that he should endeavour to prove them with arguments which were so hollow that an intelligent child might have disputed them. It seems to me that a crowd will swallow what an individual will not tolerate.

There is, too, an impertinence and a brutality in crowds. Workers trooping to a factory shout things to passers-by which not one of the workers would dream of uttering if they were there alone. Little boys coming home from school will torture a frog or tease a drunken old woman, though none of them separately would do it.

I am driven to think that we must be the possessors of a kind of dual personality—one for ordinary individual use, and the other which we put on when we are members of a crowd.

YOUR EDITOR.

Westinghouse Building, Strand, London.

LORD CHILWORTH: CRIMINAL.

REMARKABLE SERIES OF COMPLETE STORIES.

By J. PRESTWICK SHEED.

III.—THE EPISODE OF THE CABINET MINISTER.

It may be remembered that at the beginning of the brief Cabinet career of Mr. Dominic Vaughan, a grateful country hailed him as a reformer of the right sort.

He was somewhat given to advertising his reforms, but that was overlooked. When he opened the hospital in South London, for example, he spoke for fifteen minutes on the wonderful changes he had brought to pass, how he had dismissed the old red-tape-bound officials, bag and baggage, and how he had put this particular section of the national machinery into smooth running order.

His hearers cheered as heartily as decorum allowed, for the function was rather a fashionable one, and the papers of his party printed, side by side with the report of the speech, leaders congratulating the country on possessing such a brilliant young man.

I confess for my own part that I did not observe these facts till afterwards. The matter was brought to the attention of Lord Chilworth and myself by certain letters which he received from the newspaper offices. He had a standing arrangement with the proprietors of the leading journals to forward to him all letters which complained of injustice, but which they were afraid to print for fear of an action for libel, and for these letters he paid very handsomely.

On one particular morning there came from several different offices communications from the old officials who had been rooted out. They desired the editors to inform the public that Mr. Dominic Vaughan had replaced these experienced servants of the state by incompetent relatives of his own, that his plea of reform was mere bluff, but the editors thought such a disclosure to be against their policy.

Chilworth spent that day investigating the matter, for he never acted upon mere hearsay. Hither and thither over London he journeyed, visiting the homes of the now impoverished officials, and on one pretext and another interviewing several of those in the Government office who had taken their places.

"It is a case of gross injustice," he said at the end of the day. "The posts are now filled by nincompoops, some of them mere boys, who would be a disgrace to any commercial office, let alone a Government department. Mr. Dominic Vaughan is, I fear, a blatant self-advertiser, who is playing for his own hand. The position he holds is important, and with him at the helm there can be no doubt that the country will suffer much. We must remove him."

We went to the opera that night, for Chilworth's mind worked most effectively to music. It was nearly ten o'clock when he whispered to me that he had formed a plan and that we must immediately set about putting it into execution.

A few cabs were waiting for the possible early departures, and in one of these we drove to a boarding-house in Russell Square. I took a room for a few days, secured some headed paper of the establishment, announced my intention of returning later, and rejoined Chilworth on the pavement.

We then drove to his lordship's club, where we concocted and despatched to Mr. Dominic Vaughan the following letter, written on the boarding-house paper:

"Sir,—At a mass meeting of your constituents in Northshire, I was elected to represent them in laying an extremely important matter before you. Our postal service is very bad, and I have several suggestions to make as to how it might be improved. We considered it better to approach the Postmaster-General through you than directly, and not only I, but the majority of your constituents will be indebted if you grant me the favour of a short interview.—Faithfully yours, John Dobbs."

The next day Chilworth and I motored out into the country, and no one who observed his boyish smile and obvious delight in living would have imagined that the man who sat at the wheel of the purring car was a maker of plots, a self-appointed Nemesis.

We were back in town shortly after dark, and, while Chilworth waited with the car at the opposite side of the square, I called at the boarding-house and obtained a letter which was waiting for John Dobbs, Esq., which, by the way, was the name under which I had registered.

I handed the note to Chilworth, and, taking the car beneath an electric lamp, he opened it and read that Mr. Dominic Vaughan would be pleased to receive Mr. John Dobbs at eleven o'clock precisely on the following day, but that, owing to the many calls upon his valuable time, he regretted to state that the interview could not extend beyond ten minutes.

"It's just the sort of letter one might expect from a self-important prig like Vaughan," said Chilworth, "but this arrangement will suit us."

I am obliged to give the next part of my narrative from what Chilworth told me afterwards. As you will see, I was otherwise engaged during his interview with the Cabinet Minister.

Chilworth would, I believe, have made a very competent actor, and I can imagine that he simulated very successfully an awe for Mr. Vaughan which he did not feel.

He laid his proposals for the improvement of the postal service before the minister, and the latter replied in a very grandiloquent speech that it was quite impossible to deal with the reorganisation of such an institution as the Post Office at a moment's notice, but that as soon as his multifarious duties permitted of his doing so, he would bestow upon the matter his best consideration.

"Allow me to say, sir," said Mr. John Dobbs, "that we are extremely proud to have such a man as you representing our constituency. My friends assured me that I should find you in a grand house, and I can indeed tell them when I return that they were right."

It was a shaft shot at random, but it hit the mark.

Mr. Dominic Vaughan was extremely proud of the new house which he had taken on his accession to office, for it was a palatial mansion, and its importance to some extent enhanced his own. Mr. John Dobbs suggested naively that he had never seen anything like it, and what more natural than that his host should volunteer to show him over the building?

The interview had taken place in the drawing-room, and from that they wandered through the ball-room and the dining-room, and finally made their way upstairs to the famous conservatory on the roof.

Mr. Dominic Vaughan did not know very much about flowers, but he kept a man who did, and consequently the show was a good one, but it was not the flowers, but the water-pipes, which Mr. John Dobbs scrutinised most carefully.

They were half-way downstairs when Mr. Dobbs remembered that he had left his walking stick on a chair in the conservatory. Up he went to fetch it.

Once inside the conservatory door, he drew a short screwdriver from his pocket, drove it into the lead pipe which fed a fountain, ripped it back till there was a gash several inches long, and then he closed the door behind him and descended.

They entered the study next, and Mr. Dominic Vaughan showed his innocent visitor a locked bureau which, he said, contained documents that might, if their purport were known, start a world-wide war, and Mr. John Dobbs stared at the bureau open-mouthed, as if seeking inspiration from its varnish and its brass handles.

Just as they left the study a little drop of water trickled from the landing above, and caught Mr. Dominic Vaughan on the crown of his head. He looked up and saw that a tiny stream was making its way down the staircase. He was in the conservatory in a moment, and, discovering the burst pipe, came downstairs and picked up the telephone receiver in his study.

I had been waiting for that call quite ten minutes, and a rare old trouble I had had of it to persuade the exchange to keep me on to Mr. Vaughan's wire. As soon as he touched the instrument I shouted: "Hullo, who's there? I'm afraid you've put me on the wrong number. This is Smith and Hopkins, plumbers, Victoria Street."

"Yes," said Mr. Vaughan, "I imagine you are on the wrong number, but, as a matter of fact, I want a plumber at this very moment, and, as you say, your place is in Victoria Street, possibly you can send round a man at once."

I asked him the name and address and promised to send a plumber immediately. In less than five minutes I had presented myself at the house, armed with a plumber's kit and feeling more than half-doubtful whether I could make the necessary repair. I did not see Chilworth at that time, for before I arrived he had left.

It is astonishing what license a plumber can take. I discovered that it was quite necessary for me to deal with a tap beside the door that led to the little tiled garden behind the house. A maid-servant wanted to make herself agreeable, but I sent her packing, and as soon as her back was turned I extracted the screws from the sockets of the two bolts on the door, and put in their place little plugs of wood, nicely darkened on the top so as not to show.

Chilworth and I came that night over the wall and across the little tiled garden.

The door had a lock as well as bolts, but that Chilworth quickly picked. A push dislodged the wooden plugs, and the sockets fell tinkling on the concrete within. I picked up the sockets and screwed them on again, while Chilworth went upstairs to the study of the cabinet minister. When I had finished my work and joined him, I found him hard at it upon the lock of one of the drawers.

"I've got the others open," he said, "but their contents are unimportant. The treasure is, I think, here."

When the lock yielded and the drawer was opened, we found one large envelope with many official marks upon it and many seals. Chilworth put it in the pocket of his jacket, and then carefully locked each drawer.

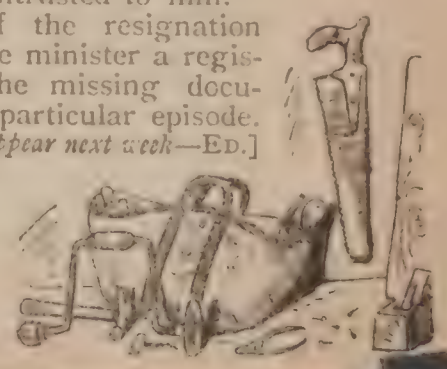
We locked the back door behind us also, and the only trace of a burglary was the fact that the bolts had been drawn, but that we knew would be put down to the carelessness of some servant, even if it were observed at all.

Before the expiration of the week the interested public learned that, owing to ill-health, Mr. Dominic Vaughan had craved his Majesty's permission to resign from the cabinet, and that his place had been filled by another.

The most sensational of the evening papers printed a rumour that his resignation was not unconnected with the loss of certain important documents which had been entrusted to him.

On the announcement of the resignation Chilworth posted to the prime minister a registered envelope containing the missing documents, and there ended this particular episode.

[*Another story of this series will appear next week*—ED.]



Business is Business

A WEEKLY FEATURE.
Conducted by
R. A. MACNAUGHTEN.

But till we are built like angels, with hammer and chisel and pen
We will work for ourself and a woman, for ever and ever, Amen. —KIPLING.

TRADING BY POST.

There is scarcely any business which could not expand beyond local needs if the system of trading by post were adopted.

The big draper can quickly double his turn over by careful advertising, the issue of catalogues, and the special solicitation of orders by post; but it is to the small man that I specially recommend this method of trade.

A shop may have been opened in a growing district by some venturesome pioneer; for many years the trade done in that shop may be small, but in the meantime the pot can be kept boiling if postal trading is properly worked up.

The first and foremost consideration is to specialise in one commodity, and that something really good. Judge from your customers' opinions what part of your stock is superior to that sold in other shops, and let your efforts to build up a postal trade be concentrated wholly on that article.

Several Scotch bootmakers who have been in the habit of supplying foot-gear for golfers in a fairly small way, have now built up very successful businesses by advertising their boots in the sporting papers, in golfing almanacks, and so forth. For them to have advertised dancing pumps would have been folly. Their addresses indicated their proximity to the golf links; Scotland is the birthplace of golf, and these bootmakers might reasonably be supposed to know how to make the best boots for golfers. And so their patronage, not only from England, but from all parts of the world, has been extensive.

Use all local advantages. A dairy company in Devonshire is doing a very good trade in Devonshire cream. This cream could be produced in other parts of the country without much trouble, but tradition ascribes it to Devonshire, and the public are most ready to patronise a firm advertising from Devonshire. They feel that they are getting a better article from such a firm than they would in the most up-to-date London store.

I have in my mind, too, the case of a young lady in the West of Ireland, who makes a very substantial income by selling Killarney ferns through the post.

Her charges are moderate—something like a penny a root if I remember rightly—but the roots are small; they are collected in quantity, the postage is very little, the advertising is done in gardening papers and in the miscellaneous columns of the dailies, and costs little, and so, though her prices are small, a fair proportion of them is profit.

She also is using the local tradition to advantage. People have heard of the Killarney ferns, and the fact that she lives near the famous lake is a fairly obvious proof that she is selling the genuine species.

The proprietor of one of the most successful patent medicines was at one time a struggling chemist in an East of England town. Finding that his customers were few and far between, and that he had a good deal of time on his hands, he determined to exploit a certain medicine which had already proved fairly popular in his town.

He advertised this first of all in a London evening paper, his advertisement costing him 3s. He kept a careful account to see whether or not the postal system would pay him. That advertisement brought him orders for ten bottles at 1s. 1½d. each. The cost of production including the bottle was about 3d. each, making the cost of producing ten 2s. 6d.

The carriage on each bottle amounted to 3d., so ten meant another half-crown. His takings amounted to 10s. for the three-halfpence had been paid for the Government stamps, and did not go into his pocket. His expenses were 5s. for production and carriage, and 3s. for the advertisement, leaving him a profit of 2s.

Two shillings was not very much, but if you compare it with the price of the advertisement, it worked out at over 66 per cent. of profit. The next advertisement brought him in considerably more than ten orders, for many people require to read a thing several times before they can be induced to act upon it. The time occupied in compounding the medicine, in packing and despatching it mattered little, for he was many hours idle each day.

As his profits from this postal trade began to increase he hired cheap labour to assist him in dealing with it, and he reduced the size of the bottles considerably, so that they might now be sent by letter-post. In a short time his profits from such orders far exceeded those made in the shop itself, and, as this section of his business increased, he was obliged to open a fairly large factory for the making of his commodity.

The next step was arranging with the trade that his medicine should be sold in the shops like other patent medicines. In this way he has built up a business scarcely surpassed in its own line, and the little shop where he started has now been sold, while the chemist himself ranks as a business prince.

I have given these illustrations, which have come within my personal knowledge, because I think more can be learned from them than from mere generalities. A few points, however, must be emphasised.

In building up a postal business it is no earthly use to sell something of inferior quality, for your customers are then disappointed, and you will never obtain repeat orders.

The second point is not to sell at too low a price. The cut price system is suicidal, and it is unwise to try to induce patronage by means of it. Rather let the public believe that your commodity is superior to anything else; if you advertise that it is cheaper than others, your readers will gather the impression that it will also be nastier.

The third point is to let your advertising campaign be extremely modest at the beginning. It is folly at the outset to take a full page in a London daily paper at a cost of several hundred pounds; let your first announcements appear amongst the miscellaneous advertisements, at an expenditure of a few shillings. If what you have to sell is really good enough to obtain public favour, you will rapidly make sufficient profit to enable you to advertise on a larger scale. The outlay of much capital at the beginning is not to be recommended.

DON'T SMILE.

Cheerfulness is a good thing, and so is laughter. The former has its place in the office; the latter has not.

An employee must be cheerful if he wants to succeed. He must, so to speak, be a well-oiled part of the office machinery, so that he works without any growling or creaking; but there is a difference between cheerfulness and hilarity. The man who is continually laughing or smiling may be a strong man and a thoughtful one, but he does not give this impression to the observer.

MASTER *v.* MAN.

HOW THE LAW VIEWS DISPUTES.

"He can't make me do this, and if he tries I'll have the law on him," is the kind of remark one frequently hears made in an office. We are a nation of amateur lawyers, but the average man in the office entertains more fallacies than facts concerning his legal status.

Dismissal is, perhaps, the knottiest subject that he has to consider. Supposing you are paid a weekly wage, your employer may assert that he is entitled to dispense with your services at a week's notice. If you have signed an agreement to such an effect he is, of course, right, but if there has been no agreement, the length of notice depends on the custom of the trade or profession.

For example, most sub-editors are paid weekly, and comparatively few of them hold or have signed written agreements; yet they cannot be dismissed at less than three months' notice, as the proprietors of several newspapers have learned to their cost.

When you take up a new situation it is a common practice to arrange that your first month shall be regarded as a trial month, and one might suppose that the employer was justified in discharging you without notice at the end of that month, but such is not the case.

If he intends dismissing you at the end of the month he must give you a fortnight's warning beforehand. That is, of course, if there is no written agreement between you, for these laws are designed to meet cases where no contract exists.

A clerk is not entitled to leave without notice, even though he pays his employer a week's salary instead of it. He must give a week's notice under any circumstances, and if he fails to do so his employer may sue him for damages.

A master is entitled to dismiss a servant without notice if he discovers that the employee is an habitual speculator on the Stock Exchange, frequently backs horses, disobeys lawful commands, is guilty of drunkenness or is dishonest. It is not necessary for the master to state to the clerk the reason for dismissal, but he must be able to justify his position should a legal action follow.

A man who is engaged to do special work implies that he is capable of doing that work, and if he is grossly incompetent he may be dismissed summarily. For example, a chauffeur who was unable to drive safely through traffic might be dismissed at once; but slight incompetence cannot be treated in this way, and the employee must under these circumstances have the usual notice.

It is a common practice for a man to apply for another situation, so that he may be able to take his prospective employer's letter to his present employer with the object of inducing the latter to increase his salary. The thing, however, is illegal. Recently an action for damages was successfully brought by a merchant against a ledger clerk whom he had agreed to engage at a salary of £2 a week, but who failed to present himself on the day arranged. The merchant had the expense of advertising a second time, and wasted another day in interviewing further applicants, and he was consequently awarded £1 in compensation.

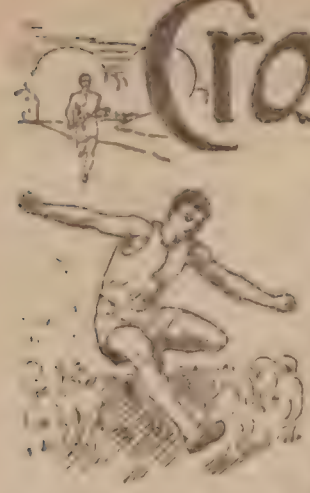
An employee can be sued if he copies out a list of his employer's customers and uses that list to his own advantage when he starts business for himself.

In many shops and warehouses there is in vogue a system of fines which are absolutely illegal, and the mulcted employee has a distinct grievance.

Employees cannot legally be fined unless particulars of the fines are shown to them at the time of engagement, or are posted prominently where they may be readily seen and copied out. When a fine is inflicted particulars of it must be given in writing to the person fined. In factories, if a workman damages certain goods, he may be charged for them only at cost price.

E. G. HAIRSINE.

Cross Country Running



A SPORT FOR COLD WEATHER.

The joys of fox-hunting are admitted by all who can afford the sport, but they are in no wise equal to those of cross-country running.

In the latter you have all the joy of dashing over fields and meadows, over fences, hedges and ditches, filling your lungs with the clean cold air, and you have the additional satisfaction unknown to the fox-hunter, of supplying within yourself your means of locomotion. You have more to do than merely sit on a horse as it makes the jump; you take the leap yourself; and you experience consequently the full delight and exhilaration of strenuous physical effort.

It is generally some consideration of these facts which induces a man to take up cross-country running as a sport. He sees a good club of harriers spinning along, and he imagines that he has merely to join them in order to share their pleasures. His first run will be a sad disillusionment.

The pace and the distance—joys and not trials to the experienced runner—are beyond the capacity of the novice. He runs half a mile with the others, and then drops to the rear of the pack, wondering whatever possessed him to take up cross-country running, and determining there and then that his initial experience shall be his last.

GOOD FELLOWS.

It is just here that the novice discovers a charm in running which neither he nor any other outsider would have guessed at; it is the kindness and good fellowship of the other members of the club. I have in my time been a member of several cross-country clubs, and in every one of them I have observed the same thing. Whether it is that this sport appeals only to the large-hearted, or whether it is that it actually creates and fosters unselfishness, I do not know; but the fact remains that in no club will you find such good comradeship as in a cross-country pack.

The beginner, puffing and blowing, and wondering when the moment will arrive when his legs will collapse beneath him, suddenly finds himself joined by one of the best runners in the club, who suits his pace to his, and even induces the tyro to go more slowly than he otherwise would do, lest he should suffer from the unaccustomed strain.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

There they plod on together, possibly half-a-mile behind the rest, the crack keeping the newcomer in countenance, and assuring him that everyone feels just the same at the outset.

The novice finally reaches the club-house, feeling a good deal of contempt for himself at being so badly beaten by the others, but this uncomfortable feeling disappears when he is assured at all hands that for a beginner he made an uncommonly good show; and so on the following Saturday afternoon he again turns out with the club, once again showing up badly, though feeling the distance less irksome, and so it goes on for perhaps half-a-dozen meetings.

Then he discovers that his stamina has increased, that his lungs and his muscles have developed, and that he can easily maintain the pace of the club's best man. It is now that he feels the joy of dashing over country, the delight which his imagination had pictured, but to obtain which he had to weather the storms of weariness and discouragement.

Should there be any who through reading this feel inclined to take up cross-country sport, let me give them a hint which will save them from the uncomfortable exhibition of greenness which every beginner makes. If before joining the club at all they will submit themselves to a simple form of training, they will find that their early trials largely disappear.

THE EVENING JOG TROT.

Let them turn out of an evening and do a jog trot of a couple of miles very slowly. Pace at this time must not be considered at all, the one object being to stay the distance.

The next night the novice might trot three miles, the next four, and so on, gradually increasing the distance, and if necessary diminishing the pace, until eight or ten miles can be covered without trouble. That is the distance generally traversed on a Saturday afternoon by a good cross-country club.

It may be urged that I have merely advised the novice to run without telling him how to do so. Concerning style and method it is impossible to lay down rules. No two runners cover the ground in the same manner, and the right style is that which you will very soon fall into—the one which brings you home with the least fatigue.

EASE BEFORE SHOW.

The officials of your club will correct any slight faults which you may have developed, but their hints will be confined largely to stopping the extravagant action which you have adopted under the impression that it looks well. A good cross-country runner cares not a whit for showy action. He keeps close to the ground, and does not lift his feet an inch more than is necessary for his next spring.

Copy his example.

Right clothing is essential, and you will be directed in this matter by the secretary of the club, or whichever official takes you in hand. Your singlet and shorts will be of the regulation club colours. The choice of shoes is in many clubs left to the discretion of the individual. Those with indiarubber soles are apt to heat the feet and to cause inconvenience at the end of a long run. The better known clubs are now adopting for cross-country work shoes resembling in many respects those used for sprinting, the chief difference being that the upper part of the shoe is cut higher, and that the spikes either do not exist or are extremely small.

FOOTGEAR.

See that the sole of your shoe is sufficiently thick to prevent your feeling gravel through it. If you find, as many a cross-country runner does, that at the end of a spin your ankles are sore, you might with advantage run in a light pair of football boots with the bars or studs removed.

For cold days and night work wear a sweater, for half the enjoyment of a run is lost if you do not perspire copiously.

During a night run you may notice that your hands get uncomfortably cold; if so, don't be ashamed to wear a pair of worsted gloves. They keep you comfortable, so blow appearances!

Don't forget to buy a pair of corks to hold. They only cost sixpence. Why a runner should want to grip something I have never been able to comprehend, but I know he does. If you don't have corks to hold your fingers seem horribly in the way.

In training for a long distance competition it is advisable to practise for a distance slightly greater than that of the race itself, so as to ensure your ability to stay.

The next most important thing is to attend to your feet. Bathe them nightly in strong salt and water to harden the cuticle, and on the day of the race rub them well with mutton tallow, and coat the inside of your socks with the same lubricant. The heat of the feet will melt the tallow and thus prevent friction. More races have been lost through blisters than for any other single cause.

F. R. LAWSON.

THE PUGILIST'S PLIGHT.

WHEREFORE THIS NEGLECT?

The successful professional in football is carefully worked, and his wants are indulgently ministered to during his years of play. When he retires he starts in business, and his fame insures his having a sufficiency of custom.

The case of the man who seeks to win laurels in the boxing ring is less happy. His reward is the purse he fights for, and possibly a percentage of the money taken at the doors; but beyond this he has to fend for himself.

Take the case of Gunner Moir as an example. When he fought Tommy Burns for the championship of the world, and made a brave though fruitless attempt to restore the former prestige of his country in matters pugilistic, the combat was watched by Lord Lonsdale and a distinguished company; but had these gentlemen done anything to help him during his period of training? Not so.

Moir is not a millionaire, and he has to live; so during the months preceding that contest he acted as wrestling partner with Hackenschmidt. This supplied him with the money necessary for his own coaching and for the hiring of boxing partners, but there can be no doubt that the work he did in earning it tended greatly to stiffen his muscles, and probably accounted for his defeat.

And this, mind you, is the case of a man who was endeavouring to bring back the championship to Britain. The gallant sportsmen who turned up in evening dress to watch his fight had done nothing to help him to win.

What then is the lot of a man who is training for an event of less importance? He is simply ignored. There is no sort of organisation for assisting him, and he has to struggle for a livelihood all the time he is training.

When that is the case when pugilists are at their prime, what is to happen to them when they are past taking their place in the ring?

Sometimes they set up as teachers of boxing, but that demands business acumen, a thing that your pugilist seldom possesses. Fitzsimmons does remarkably well teaching physical culture by post, but he is in many respects an exceptional man, and cannot be regarded as typifying his class.

The early life of the pugilist necessitates so many hours off for practice that he finds it impossible to work at a trade. When therefore he sees that his boxing days are over, he is driven to seek casual work of one kind or another.

Then comes the temptation to turn his special knowledge to an illegitimate use. He cannot take his place in the ring, but there is always an opening for him in the service of a disreputable bookmaker.

If he is willing to fight when the bookie tells him to, and without questioning the right or the wrong of the matter, he can earn a comfortable living and something over.

He is engaged as a "snatcher." His duties are to accompany the bookmaker to the racecourse and to grab the betting slips from those who present them to his employer for payment. In this way the bookie escapes all payments of winnings, so that he can well afford to keep a retinue of decayed boxers; and fighters they must be, for it is not every victim who takes the theft of his betting slip without protest.

Such then is the fate of the majority of pugilists. Poverty drives them into the service of men they despise, and impels them to commit crimes which in their more prosperous days they would have turned from with abhorrence.

They have spent their youth in what seemed at the time an easy and attractive job; in their old age they must drink the dregs.

Much has been said and written about the downfall of professional boxing, and it has been suggested that the race of fighters who flourished in the past has now died out. The truth is that the status of the ring must be raised by proper encouragement being given to the exponents of the art; then we shall see a return of its ancient glories.

T. D. MEADER.

THE PROFESSOR'S MONEY

COMPLETE SHORT STORY.

By
ERNEST TUCKER.

"I tell you," said Cowley, "I'd give you money if I had it. You know I've always helped you when I could, but here is the sum total of my possessions"—and he drew from his pocket half-a-sovereign, a shilling or two, and some pence.

"Mere froth!" said Field. "I am prepared to be generous and believe that what you show me is actually all the cash you've got in hand, but you know as well as I do that your uncle can be tapped to an unlimited extent."

"If you knew my uncle," replied Cowley, "you would say nothing of the sort. I know and you do that he must have thousands of pounds somewhere about his house, but though he doesn't use the money he won't part with it. We should be just as likely to get assistance from the Chancellor of the Exchequer as from him. I've written to him—how often I don't know; sometimes he replies, sometimes he doesn't, but he never sends me anything."

"Then, dammit, let's go and call on him," said Field. "We'll see whether my persuasive tongue can't get something out of him."

They spent the best part of Cowley's half-sovereign in the purchase of tickets to the country station beside which the professor had his house.

For years John Glover had been professor of toxicology at a famous university, and had become one of the leading authorities of the day on the action of little-known poisons. It was his knowledge in this respect which had indirectly brought him his fortune and changed his mode of life.

He saved from a lingering death a wealthy amateur scientist who had inoculated himself accidentally with a chemical poison. Years after, when the man died, he left his money in gratitude to John Glover.

The professor, finding himself independent, resigned his chair at the university and betook himself to the estate thus unexpectedly left him, there to pursue his investigations unhampered now by the need of earning a livelihood by teaching.

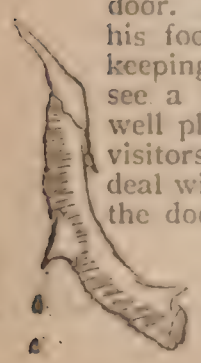
£10,000 a year was in round figures the amount of his annual income, and he lived in a style that did not absorb more than a fraction of it. The rest he hoarded.

There is a dormant taint of niggardliness in most of us, and John Glover, had he searched his thoughts, would have been obliged to admit that this characteristic had developed to a strong extent in himself. But he did not search his thoughts; his mind was centred upon poisons and on them alone.

The two young men reached the station in a state of partial collapse, for both of them were unaccustomed to spend so long a time as had been taken over the journey without alcoholic stimulant. They rushed to a small hotel beside the station, and temporarily fortified nerves that had been shaken by years of unbridled dissipation.

Then at length they set forth for the professor's house.

When they had rung again and again and knocked repeatedly, Glover himself opened the door. It appeared that the woman who cooked his food for him and made some pretence of keeping the house clean, had gone that day to see a friend, and the professor was none too well pleased to be interrupted in his work by visitors. In fact he showed an inclination to deal with his nephew and his nephew's friend on the doorstep.



Cowley was somewhat taken aback by his uncle's lack of cordiality, and he might even have stated his case bluntly and received the usual refusal then and there, but Field was a man of greater determination. Chatting boldly about the weather, as if he and the professor had long been friends, he pushed his way past the old man and into the entrance hall.

It was now impossible for the professor not to invite them to sit down, and so with an ill-grace he led them across the hall, opened the drawing-room door and invited them to enter.

It was obvious to Field, who possessed the quicker wit of the two visitors, that the professor was not in the habit of using the room himself, and apparently the housekeeper had turned it into a kind of private boudoir for her own personal use. On a small table near the middle of the floor lay a plate, some apple rind, and a fruit-stained table knife.

When they had seated themselves and Cowley had at last gone through the form of introducing his friend to his uncle, Field at once made his mission known.

"It is a scandalous thing," he said turning to the professor, "that with all your immense wealth you keep your nephew in such abject poverty. You should be proud and happy to have such a promising young man dependent upon you."

"If he has become promising," said the professor drily, "it must have been since his last visit here. Since ever I have known him my nephew has been shiftless and dissolute, good for nothing except drinking and spending money with low companions. I hope I do not wrong you, sir, in classing you amongst the latter, but the fact that you come here as a friend of his is no great recommendation."

Cowley twisted uneasily on his chair and bit his under-lip, while his face became purple with mingled shame and indignation. Field smiled quietly, for things were developing exactly as he had intended and hoped they should do.

"And so," continued the professor, turning to Cowley, "you have the effrontery to bring here an advocate to plead your cause. You lack the courage to face me alone, and thus you proclaim yourself in addition to your multitude of other faults, as a coward. You also made me a promise that you would reform. I can see that you have not done so, and thus you furnish me with proof of the fact that you are also a liar."

The blood had vanished from Cowley's cheeks, and when he leaped to his feet his face was as pale as death.

"Well, my young man," said the professor, looking up at him calmly. "Don't you think you had better sit down? You don't look as if you were quite strong enough to keep on your feet so long. May I ask what you propose to do?"

"Do?" echoed Cowley. "I'm going to kill you!"

Before the professor could move out of danger, his nephew seized the table knife which lay on the plate beside him and plunged it into his uncle's breast. Then he drew back, and stumbled to his chair.

"My God, what have I done!" he cried. "Field, this is your fault. You worked the old man up to insult me, and you've filled me with liquor till I am scarcely responsible for my actions."

"Don't talk nonsense," replied Field. "It's neither my fault nor yours. He has brought his fate upon his head by his own conduct and foolish words."

The professor lay on his side on the rug, the blood pouring from the wound.

"Young man," he said in a faint voice, and pausing between each word, "you've murdered me. I feel that I cannot survive for more than a minute or two. If you would do me a last favour pull out this knife; it burns my flesh like red hot steel."

Cowley could not bring himself to touch the thing with which he had done the dreadful deed, but Field had no such compunction. He stepped across to the professor, and did his bidding.

"Where do you keep your money?" he whispered eagerly to the dying man.

"Shall I tell him?" the professor inquired, looking at Cowley, and as the latter nodded he continued: "You will find it in a large box beneath the rose bed in the centre of the lawn."

Field sprang up from the side of the dying man, and John Glover smiled. Then the professor fell back upon the carpet dead.

"We must get the money and be off before his housekeeper arrives," said Field.

"I couldn't touch the money," said Cowley, "there's blood upon it, and it would bring us nothing but evil."

"Don't be an ass," urged Field. "You may consider yourself extremely lucky that I had the foresight to ask him where it was. After all it's good clean money, however it was come by, and I for one am going to have my share of it. Come on!"

And Cowley, being weak, went.

The rose bed was soon reached, and Field wrenched up the bushes one by one, flinging them to the side. Then feverishly he seized a spade and cast the mould out upon the grass. Not more than twelve inches from the surface he came upon the lid of a wooden box. Throwing away his spade he scratched at the earth with his fingers.

"I wish he had chosen some other place than a rose bed to hide his money in," he remarked. "The earth is full of thorns. This is the second I've pulled out of my hand since we began."

But thorns are trivial matters to a man like Field when several thousands of pounds are almost within his grasp, and so he threw out the earth till at length the top of the box was clear.

It was not locked in any way, and he was about to lift the lid when he started as if seized by cramp.

"I'm not accustomed to manual labour," he said, "and I'm afraid in my enthusiasm I've overdone it. My right hand and arm are as sore as if they had been stung up and down with nettles, and my back aches like the devil."

He bent down again to raise the lid of the box, but once more again there shot through him that intolerable pain. Collapsing on the grass beside the hole he had dug, he drew his hand across his forehead.

"How dark it has got," he said, "and how my head throbs!"

With that he fell over, and appeared to lie in a kind of faint.

Cowley, who had so far been watching proceedings without taking any part in them, was now overcome by curiosity and greed to see what the box contained. He crossed over to open it, but just as he took the hasp from the staple his hand came in contact with a thorn.

He pulled it from his flesh, but the wound stung horribly.

Cowley glanced round to where his friend was lying stone dead with his head bent back till it nearly touched his heels. Now he knew why the professor had smiled after disclosing the place where his money lay concealed.

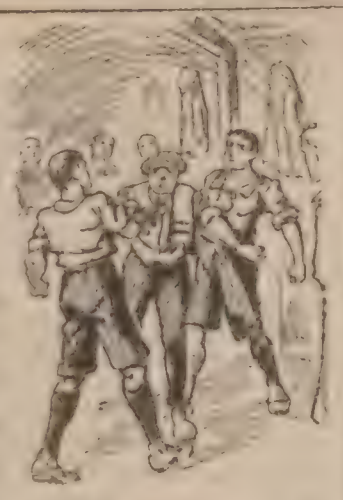
He had protected it more effectually with his knowledge of poisons than the most skilful safe-builder could have done with plates of steel.

Cowley sucked the spot from which he had drawn the thorn. Already the flesh had become black around the tiny puncture, but the pain went up his arm, his back ached, and his head throbbed, and he knew that it was too late.

He threw himself upon the grass and buried his face in his hands, and the garden was perfectly still save for the twitter of an inquisitive sparrow which had come to investigate.

TRAINING AND TACT.

BY THE TRAINER OF A FIRST-DIVISION CLUB.



The follower of football who believes that the trainer is merely a rubber-down, knows nothing about the work which falls to our lot.

I have sometimes thought that there is more demand for diplomacy in my own particular line than in almost any other. To begin with, I have under my control thirteen or fourteen healthy young men who know that they are very good football players and that they are much admired by outsiders.

You can scarcely blame them for becoming a little vain, nor is it surprising that they should at times be jealous of one another.

They are mostly blunt, outspoken men, and the class from which they come knows little about the oil of ceremony that prevents friction in social intercourse. Considering all these things, you will not be surprised to learn that I have to exercise my utmost ingenuity in preventing quarrels between the various members of my team.

QUARREL PATCHING.

The need for my keeping a tight hand upon them need hardly be emphasised, for if I allowed a spirit of jealousy or enmity to grow up, the team would be weakened. Since I joined my present club I have devoted much time and trouble to fostering good comradeship amongst our players, and I have every reason to believe that to this must be attributed much of the undoubted improvement in their play.

It is not very difficult to patch a quarrel, provided you nip it in the bud and that without letting either party know that you are really peacemaking. If the trainer took the two men by the ears, so to speak, and, exerting his official authority, told them to shake hands and say they were friends, they would be greater enemies than ever.

My plan is what I might call scandal reversed. Supposing that Smith and Jones are at loggerheads I wait till Smith is not present and then I make a point of congratulating Jones on his play, casually mentioning that he is now miles ahead of the half-back in a rival team, "as Smith was just saying this morning."

UNFRIENDLY COMPLIMENTS.

Soon after I tackle Smith in the same way, inferring in my conversation that Jones has expressed a very flattering opinion of him. This system I have never known to fail.

The greatest enemy of the football player is in my opinion the admirer who is constantly asking him to have a friendly drink. The average player is a good-hearted chap and does not like to hurt the feelings of the other by refusing, and so he is inclined occasionally to drink more than is good for himself or his play.

The men know that they ought not to drink more than a certain amount, and they feel that they are hardly doing the right thing when they accept too many of these friendly offers. This feeling on their part is half the battle won so far as I am concerned. The victory generally becomes mine completely by the exercise of another little system which I have invented.

There are only two or three public houses in our town which are favoured by footballers, and to the proprietors of each of these I have frankly stated my case, pointing out to them the inevitable harm that will result to the player who gets drunk, and requesting them to let me know whenever one of my men drinks more than he ought to.

The landlords are enthusiastic footballers themselves and, anxious to do anything they can for the home team, have adopted my suggestion. Thus when my men assemble on the ground at ten o'clock for the morning's practice I am in a position to say to a player: "Look here, Brown, you had more than you ought to last night. You know your play will fall off if you don't keep yourself in check a bit more."

I, of course, never tell Brown how I happen to know that he was drunk the previous evening, and he begins to think that I have some private means of knowing all he does, and the player who lacks self-control has in this way an additional inducement to keep straight at all times.

THE CASE OF A——.

Some men, however, cannot be kept from over-indulgence in liquor. I shall not readily forget the case of A——, one of the cleverest forwards it has ever been my good fortune to train. In spite of his talent he was more than inclined to dissipation. One night before an important match he got hopelessly drunk, and was carried home as limp as a rag in the early hours of the morning.

The manager and I consulted together as to what should be done. In his present condition A—— was obviously unfit to play, and yet we could not find a man anything like his equal. So we administered emetics and anti-pyrine and pulled him round sufficiently to enable him to get a decent sleep and eat some breakfast.

When the time for the match arrived he had nothing like recovered his fitness, so we decided to apply a hair of the dog that bit him. To let him drink more liquor would have been inadvisable, so I applied it externally, as I had often done to myself in my younger days when I was in the midst of an exceptionally trying walk and required a stimulant.

RUBBING IT IN.

Just before the match we rubbed him all over with whisky, which was absorbed by his skin. That afternoon he played the match of his life and we won very easily. It was about his last match, however, for he could not keep himself from drink and shortly afterwards was lost to football altogether.

The trainer has to observe the play of his various men and strengthen them just where they are weak. For my own part I believe in having each man of a team good all round, but a specialist in one particular phase of the game, and I make my men practise their own particular line sometimes for an hour on end.

I have much more faith in this than in mere muscular training. It seems to me you cannot overtrain a man in the way of cleverness, but you can very quickly do so in the matter of physique.

The collapse of McClatchie and Crabtree are memorable illustrations of the harm an overzealous trainer can do. Both these men would have been much better left alone so far as exercise was concerned. They were naturally strong and fit, and it was the overtraining of their muscles which broke them down.

THE TRAINER AS DOCTOR.

A trainer must have an extensive knowledge of drugs and their uses. I do not suggest for a moment that he would be foolish enough to physic his men continually, but there are times when he must know how to apply the simpler forms of first aid.

Another thing that falls to the care of the trainer is the footgear of the players. Our team carries a complete cobbler's outfit, and I know that several other trainers do likewise. If a stud comes off I must know how to fix it again at half-time, for to give a player a fresh pair of boots would likely spoil his form altogether.

Then we have to know how to deal with the boots in wet weather when the ground is muddy. Some trainers believe in coating the soles with soft soap, but for muddy ground I have found it best to thickly blacklead them and polish them brightly; this prevents the mud from clogging up the studs. J. C.

CONCENTRATED SLEEP.

TIPS FOR THE OVER-WORKED.

You may have wondered how the heart can continue working day and night during a lifetime. The explanation is that after each beat it takes a rest of a fraction of a second, a sufficient time to give it exactly six hours' sleep in the twenty-four; thus it is kept fit although we are never conscious of its having dozed at all.

In the same way our brains rest in sections. While listening to a play or to music, the faculties by which you earn your living during the day are resting more or less completely.

It is this faculty of the brain which, as Sir James Crichton Browne once pointed out, enables people who suffer from insomnia to keep healthy and to do their work. Although they are unaware of sleep, yet sections of their brains have been resting while the others have been busy.

Here then we have the first hint for the man who, owing to pressure of business, is unable to obtain the usual eight hours' repose. He can, by resting his brain whenever possible, and by frequent changes of mental effort, obtain from one to two hours' rest each day.

Let us consider the case of the average man who is lunching in a restaurant. If, instead of gazing about him and speculating concerning the trades and characters of the people he sees, he concentraed his mind upon the food he was eating, he would be resting the faculties of observation and deduction which he employs to earn his daily bread; if he acquired the gift of making his mind for the time a blank, he would be doing better still, for he would be resting his whole mind instead of a part of it.

The next economy may be practised in the quality of the sleep obtained. Professor Gotch has stated that sleep is of two kinds; one, the normal sleep, which is obtained by labourers; the other, the neurotic sleep, which is obtained by most brainworkers.

In the normal or sound sleep you are quickly rested, for the sub-conscious section of the brain, as well as the conscious part of it, has ceased to work. In the neurotic type, sleep is very profound for the first hour, but after that it is so shallow that dreams are of constant occurrence, and for the complete refreshment of the brain a longer period must be spent in bed.

The man who is obliged to do with a minimum of sleep should therefore see to it that the slumber he enjoys is of the normal and not of the neurotic kind. Those brainworkers who sleep too lightly should, before retiring, go through a few gymnastic exercises.

There is no need for these to be long continued. Provided they are sufficient to draw the blood from the head to the muscles, they will relieve the brain of its congestion, and a normal and more refreshing sleep will be obtained.

The third economy is in the matter of waking. There are several ways of waking up; some smoke a cigarette, some have a cup of tea, some a brandy and soda, and some lie for half-an-hour in a state of lethargy bordering on coma.

However bad the others may be, the last method is the worst.

By cutting off this half-hour's daze—for it scarcely amounts to a doze—you are able to save another half-hour. Possibly you argue that if you got up immediately you awakened you would find yourself yawning, feeling unfit for your work and ready to be disagreeable at the breakfast table.

These feelings are due to the over-loading of the lymph vessels with the somewhat impure blood that has accumulated in them during the night. The cure for this is again exercise, which should not be so heavy as to interfere with the store of energy which is required for the day's labour, but which should be rather active than hard, and calculated to restore the circulation to its full force.

When the blood courses through the veins the clogging matter in these glands is removed, and you feel fresh again. ALFRED MOIR, B.Sc.

THE GREENHORN

COMPLETE SHORT STORY.

By PHILIP TANNER.

The dealers spotted him directly he came on the fair ground.

"Here's a mug," said Bill.

"I'll see if I can't sell him this old screw with the broken knees," said Crossy.

"No, you don't," said Bill. "Not till I've had first go at him. It's only fair; I saw him first."

By this time the stranger had arrived within earshot; so the dealers ceased to exchange confidences and prepared themselves for the attack.

He was a young man something under twenty-five one would say, and he appeared not only green but wealthy.

He had fair hair and blue eyes whose innocence was self-evident. He looked about the fair ground with intense interest and a little amusement, as one who had never been to such a place before.

All the dealers—except Crossy, who was making a final examination of the knees of his worst screw at the time—observed the stranger take from his pocket a gold cigarette case and draw from it a gold-tipped cigarette. Even Crossy, who looked up a moment later, observed the greenhorn consult a beautiful gold watch.

He would have liked to tackle him concerning the steed with the broken knees there and then, but Bill must be allowed first shot, not because of the justice of the case but because Bill had proved himself capable of fistically resenting any infringement of his interests.

"Now, sir, now!" cried Bill. "Half a bidder's worth twenty lookers-on. Is there anything in my little string here that takes your fancy?"

The stranger smiled and came nearer.

"Well, I don't know but what there might be," he said. "You see, I have just decided to stock a farm and go in for the simple life. I'd want a few horses, I daresay. I don't know how many though."

"Horses," said Bill, his face as solemn as a judge's, "I should think you'd want horses. Motors they ain't no good on a farm. And as for how many, I think about thirty would suit you. My own string here is twenty all told, but my friends could make you up the other ten."

The stranger giggled knowingly at this.

"Ah," he said, "you'd like to rush me in for buying up all your lot, but I'm too fly for any kid's trick like that. I fancy I know something about a horse, and if I buy at all I'll make my own selections and not purchase in bulk."

"Well," said Bill, "which one of mine do you fancy for a start?"

"That light bay looks not so bad," said the greenhorn.

"Right you are, sir," said Bill. "I see you know something about a horse, you do. Here, Tommy, pick out that light bay. I mean the young one, the pretty one, the pick of the bunch."

Tommy was Bill's henchman, and a sturdy ruffian withal. He made his way through the score of horses which formed Bill's stock in trade till he reached one of the oldest and least lovely, a light bay gelding which stood near the centre of the troop.

Tommy shouted and waved his arms as he approached the light bay, in order if possible to frighten it and make it show some lingering traces of animation, but the light bay scarcely lifted its eyelids, nor did it trouble to cover its teeth with its poor old underlip which hung flabbily downwards.

The light bay's day of animation was past—had been past for ten years or more. Tommy caught it by the halter and led it to where the greenhorn was standing.

"Somehow," said the greenhorn, "I don't think that horse will be quite heavy enough for farm work."

"Farm work!" cried Bill in astonishment. "Who'd think of putting a beauty like that to haul carts and drag ploughs? No, sir, he's a hunter, that is. You'll want a hunter when you're living in the country."

"Upon my word," said the stranger, "I believe I will. Is he a good jumper?"

"Oh, just leave him alone for jumping!" cried Bill, throwing his hands upwards and raising his eyes till he showed the whites from underneath, and his advice, taken literally, was doubtless sound.

"Well, if that's so," said the greenhorn, "I have half a mind to take him, but I must examine his teeth first to see his age. Now, the book says——"

"'The book says'!" repeated Bill. "Why, his mouth is a open book, it is!" And he opened the horse's mouth for his patron's inspection.

Two teeth had been drawn, and most of the others had been filed, but obviously the stranger did not observe these dental alterations and repairs.

"How much do you want for him?" he asked.

Bill pondered.

"Fifty pounds," he said at length. "That's the very lowest I could take, sir."

The stranger seemed to have some vague idea as to the necessity of bargaining, for he succeeded at length in beating down the dealer to forty pounds, a sum which was quite satisfactory to that gentleman, for the light bay was about the worst horse he had.

"Now," said Bill, when this bargain had been completed, "now that your highness has been supplied with a hunter, you'll have to think of the farm stock, the horses as is going to earn your bread for you."

"I've just been wondering," said the greenhorn, "whether yours would be heavy enough."

"Ah, now," said Bill, "you're back to the books again, sir. You've got in your mind some pictures you've seen of them there fat, bloated Clydesdales. They ain't a bit o' good on a farm. What you want is a horse that has less of itself to move about, and is consequently quicker on its feet."

"Is that so?" said the stranger. "I daresay you're right. You might select a horse you think would be suitable then."

And he drew out and lit another gold-tipped cigarette.

Bill ran his eye over his property, and picked out the very worst. He had struck a green thing, and meant to play up to his luck for all he was worth.

The horse he drew forward was blind of one eye. It had a very bad ringbone on the near forefoot, and there was something the matter with the tendon of the off hind leg which made it lift that hoof as if it wanted to scratch its stomach.

"What's the matter with its hind leg?" asked the stranger.

"Matter!" cried Bill. "Why, that's action! He's a spirited horse, he is, but all the same he's as quiet as a lamb."

"Is that so?" said the stranger. "I suppose you're right."

None of the dealers so much as smiled, for they were masters of self-control.

This horse had, it appeared, been reared by the dealer since it was a foal. It was a particular favourite and he could not think of parting with it for less than £40.

The stranger tried to beat him down a little, but Bill stuck to his guns, and the £40 was finally agreed to as the price.

So it went on till Bill had in the course of an hour sold to the stranger sixteen of his twenty screws.

The other four had still a year or two of usefulness left in them, and they did not appear to be actually suffering from disease, but strangely enough the buyer would have nothing to do with them, sticking to the worst as nicely as even Bill himself could have wished.

Then Crossy tackled the stranger concerning his charger with the broken knees.

This unfortunate animal had fallen some weeks before, and the skin had scarcely healed above the wounds on its knees, but the ingenious Crossy had glued on pieces of the skin of a horse that had died the day before, and the patching had been so cleverly done that at first glance the knees appeared whole.

Apart from this rather serious defect the animal was not wholly bad. It is true it had caught its previous owner by the seat of his breeches while he attempted to mount it, and had dropped him in the horsetrough. It had also kicked a stableman rather badly, and once or twice it had bolted. But as dealers' horses go it was not so bad.

Anyone but a greenhorn would have seen that this horse was ridiculously light for farm work, and even the stranger whom the dealers now had in hand ventured to suggest that he held this opinion, but his opposition was borne down by the eloquence of the seller, and eventually the broken-kneed charger changed hands for four ten-pound notes.

Crossy sold him nine horses altogether.

A third dealer, who had been waiting impatiently for his opportunity, sold him three; and two others, who had fetched their horses to the spot when they saw what was going on, sold him one each.

The price paid was in no case under £30 and the value of the horse was in no case over a sovereign.

When the greenhorn had paid for his purchases with ten-pound notes—he did not seem to carry anything smaller—he engaged ten men to collect his thirty horses, and, leading the way, he walked down the principal street till they arrived at a long disused cow-shed. Into this the thirty screws were ushered and were tied up in the stalls.

A jeering crowd, which had followed this astonishing cavalcade of derelicts from the fair ground, now gathered about the door of the cow-shed, and tenderly inquired whether it was the stranger's intention to make a deal with the War Office.

The greenhorn smiled innocently—almost foolishly—upon them, and, when they saw him lock the door and put the key in his pocket, they concluded the performance was past, and went their ways.

Then the stranger interviewed a butcher with whom he had already settled terms for the killing of thirty old horses.

The butcher and an assistant accompanied the stranger to the cow-shed, which had been selected for its proximity to the butcher's slaughterhouse, where the thirty old screws received one by one their quietus.

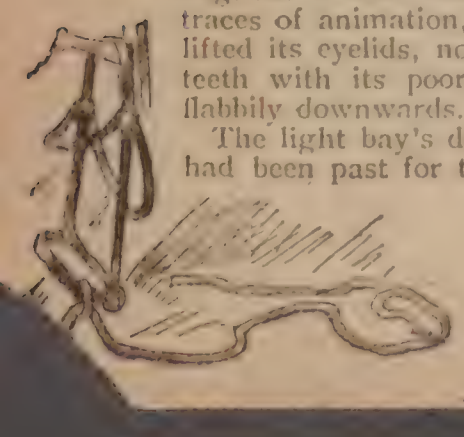
"I must say," remarked the butcher when he had finished his work, "that I admire your type of kind-heartedness. These poor old brutes were only suffering torture by being kept alive, for every one of them is diseased, but it must have cost you a pretty penny to buy them from the dealers. What is to be done with the carcases, sir?"

"Let them lie here meantime," replied the stranger. "They will doubtless be called for either this evening or to-morrow morning."

Then he walked to the railway station, took train, and was never seen again in that town.

The carcases were duly called for by five irate dealers who had discovered on presenting the ten-pound notes at the bank that they were all bad ones. The carcases would fetch only thirty shillings each from the knacker, but that was quite as much as the dealers had paid for the horses, and in some cases a little more.

Those five are now very cautious in their dealings with simple strangers.



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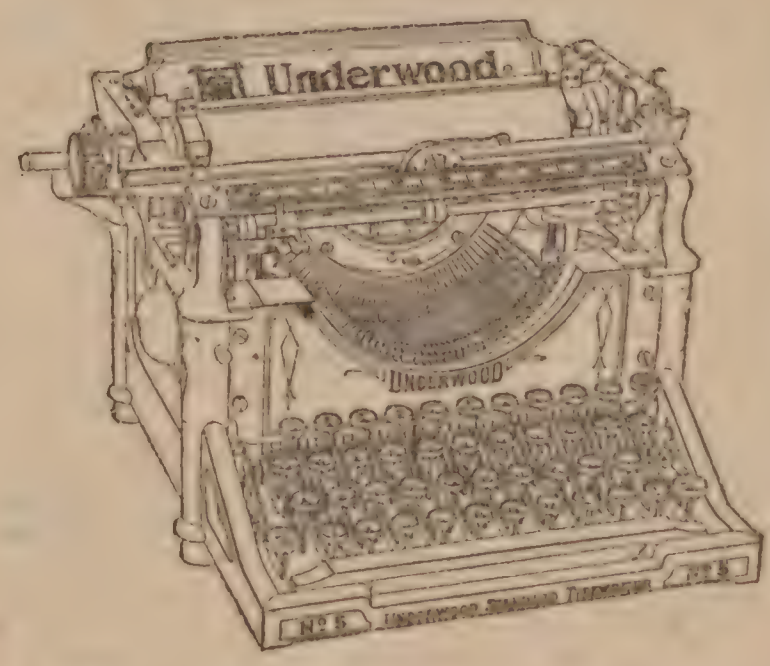

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MY CLOSE SHAVES.

A FOXY HISTORY.

My age now is five, which says a good deal for my ingenuity, for the hunting in my country is scientific and regular.

The first taste of real danger was when I was little more than a cub. For field after field hounds had been after me, and, though I can beat them easily for the first few hundred yards they always begin to win after that. I knew they were close behind me though I dare not waste time looking round, and I also knew that there was no earth to which I could fly nearer than a mile away.

So I put my best foot foremost and spanked along all I could go; then, using my brush as a pivot, I wheeled about, retraced my steps for twenty yards and took as big a jump as I could, with the wind, of course, and not against it.

This landed me close to a gorse bush, and I scrambled beneath it, peeping out to watch the hounds go by. They came to where I turned, but the scent going no further, they were left completely at fault. When I had regained my wind, I crept down to a ditch and stole along it unnoticed.

I have often used this wheeze since then.

I hate being dug out; I think it is not playing the game. When a fox manages to get to earth he ought to be allowed his life. One day I got to earth in a drain close beside the farm. I thought I was all right till I heard a pick and a spade busy above me. Presently I saw daylight behind as well as before, and knew that I should soon be pulled out.

I would, of course, have to make a run for it, but I was gasping for breath and pretty well spent. The huntsman drew off the hounds for a dozen yards, and out I bolted from the mouth of the drain.

Did I seek the open country? Not so. In the farmyard a flock of sheep had been penned; they were standing close together, and, dashing through the gate, I ran between their legs. The hounds were over the gate in an instant. They were too big to follow me between the sheep, so they had to run over their backs.

I was completely lost to sight, and, waiting till the hounds were at the other side of the flock, I darted through a hurdle, stole down behind a hedge and made off. My rest in the drain had freshened me wonderfully, and I got clear away.

Any strong smell helps to kill our scent. When the leaves are rotting in the autumn hounds find it very difficult to follow us, and the trick I have just told you of, running amongst sheep, is another favourite method of ridding ourselves of our pursuers.

I remember once being hard pressed at a place where I knew there was no shelter. I and the hounds were far in front of the followers, so I knew that if I baffled the noses of the hounds I need not bother with the eyes of the men.

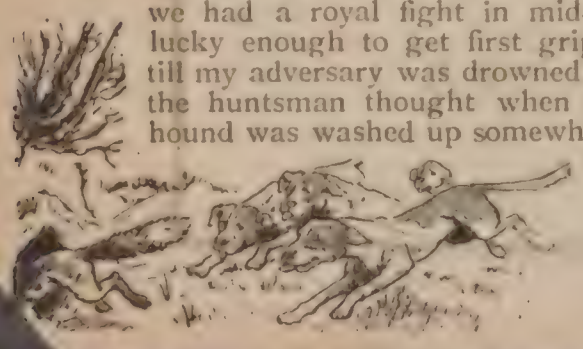
At the end of the meadow in which I was flying there was a gate with a turf wall at each side of it. I bolted over the turf wall and jumped from there on to a manure heap. I ran over this and made my way down the field, which was a ploughed one. No hound can follow a fox over plough if it has touched manure, and once more I escaped.

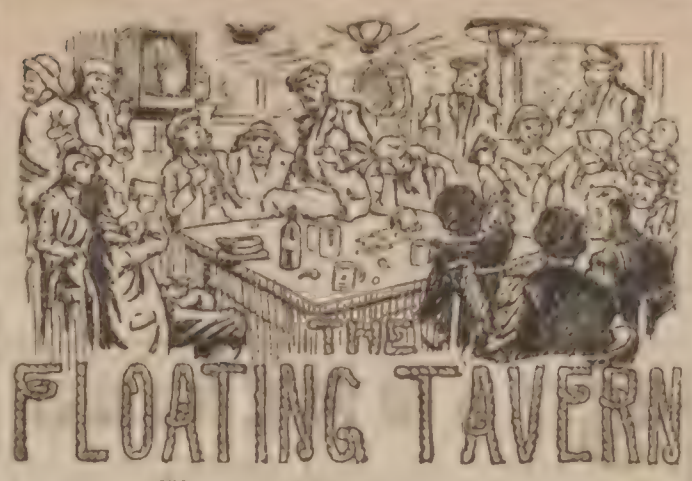
Another time a cousin of mine had just been killed near the place where I myself was resting. An old hound, not troubling about the fox that was being broken up, scented me, and off I tore across country with this one hound after me. I was making for a plank footbridge that spanned a stream, but since I had been there the floods had washed the plank away.

Here was a pretty pickle.

I was going too quickly to stop and I jumped into the water. The hound jumped in too, and we had a royal fight in mid-stream. I was lucky enough to get first grip, and I held on till my adversary was drowned. I wonder what the huntsman thought when the body of the hound was washed up somewhere down stream.

T. W. GARDEN.





'Tis grog, only grog,
Is his rudder, his compass, his log;
The sailor's sheet anchor is grog.—DIBDEN.

The master and owner of the "cooper" is a Dutchman, and it must be pure avarice that prompts him to continue plying his trade, for he has long since amassed a fortune. His vessel is an old fishing smack, and it carries nets for all to behold, but it never fishes—for finny prey.

If a policing gun-boat appears, all hands on the "cooper" fly to the net, dip it in the water and stow it dripping on the deck again, as proof positive of their efforts to catch fish. That the men on the gun-boat fail to see through these tactics must not be set down to negligence, for the vessel looks precisely as its fellows, and on its bows it bears letters and a number proving it to be registered as a fishing craft at a port in Holland.

MINE HOST.

The Dutchman has found a better paying trade than fishing. He supplies bad tobacco and fiery liquor to the trawlermen of the Dogger Bank, and they appreciate him somewhere beyond his worth.

He has to pay no duty on his goods, so he could, if he liked, supply them cheaper than a shore publican. But he does not like. Free from competition, he charges what he can get, and a thirsty trawlerman will pay a lot.

The revenue cutters, like the police boats, would down him if they could, but the Dutchman has a clear eye and a good telescope, and they have no chance of catching him. In fact he likes them: they afford him a ready excuse when he is accused by his customers of charging too much for his wares. In such a case he will talk volubly of the gigantic risks he is taking, risks which practically do not exist, as he knows so well how to avoid them.

When night falls a boat pulls alongside the "cooper" and men in oilskins and seaboots scramble aboard. The Dutchman stands at the head of the companion ladder, all smiles and bows of welcome, and ushers his guests into the cabin below.

Though small this compartment has been fitted up with some luxury. The far end is divided off by a bar, and round the walls are padded seats, more inviting than are to be seen in many a shore hostelry.

GLITTER AND NOISE.

The lamps, of which there are many, are slung near the roof, to be out of the way in the event of a fight, an occurrence which is not rare. Clamped to the wall is an automatic musical box which plays tunes on the insertion of pence into its gaping slot, and the visitors see to it that the machine is kept busy all the evening.

Presently the cabin reeks of tobacco smoke and the fumes of hot liquor, and the ear is deafened with the sound of shouting, laughing, singing and the ever jangling music machine. In a short time another boatload of customers arrive and they too crowd into the little cabin. As the evening wears on more and more come aboard till at length there is not room for them all below, and the Dutchman tries to persuade the latest arrivals to be content with seats on deck.

He is naturally delighted when custom is brisk, and, while the pallid young man whom he has stationed behind the bar attends to the needs of the men in the cabin, he himself supplies those on deck from a store which he keeps above for such an emergency; but this very overplus of business may be his undoing.

The men from one trawler ask each other why those from a rival boat should enjoy the comforts of the cabin while they themselves shiver on the dripping deck. Priority of arrival appears to them no excuse for what they consider an injustice, and it frequently happens under these circumstances that the deck customers ignore all the Dutchman's remonstrances and hurl themselves down the companion ladder.

Now comes the turn of the men in the cabin to have a sense of injury. Why, they ask themselves, should they be crushed and jostled by anybody, and especially by the crew of a rival boat? And then someone protests forcibly, the reply being an unpleasant epithet, and the counter a blow.

That is the signal for a general fight. Friends and rivals become hopelessly mixed to the fuddled senses of the Dutchman's customers, and each man pounds vigorously at the face or head nearest to him.

TUMULT.

The Dutchman watches them sorrowfully from the head of the stairs, for he knows from experience that half the company will be unconscious when the fight ends, and unconscious men are no use as customers. He would rob them—he tried it on one occasion—but the other half would do him an injury. Therefore he contents himself with watching.

It is said on the Dogger that the master of a "cooper" once tried to stop a fight by directing a stream of water from a hand-pump upon the combatants; but the idea did not work very well.

The men stopped fighting, it is true, but in retaliation for their wetting they combined in wrecking the cabin, leaving behind them a chaos more uninviting than the fishwell from which the apartment had been constructed.

The Dutchman waits patiently till his clients are either insensible or too tired for further fighting. Then he descends and makes the best of things.

The victors need no pressing to order further refreshments for themselves, but he points out that it is their bounden duty to administer stimulants to those they have laid out.

FRIENDS AGAIN.

Being good-hearted fellows they agree, and many a glassful of expensive liquor is spilt over the floor and over the face and hair of the vanquished instead of finding its way into their mouths, but the Dutchman does not worry about this, for the victors are paying for the wasted grog, and in this way he recoups himself for the liquor the unconscious men would otherwise have drunk.

Presently the eyes of the sleepers open, and they and their vanquishers at once become sworn friends, a development which means further drinking in celebration thereof.

When most of the fallen have recovered, a move is made for the boats, those who can walk dragging or carrying those who can't, the Dutchman leading the way and assisting to lower the insensible ones into the boats.

The return to the cold, outer air freshens the men up, and there is generally at least one in each boat who is capable of taking the oars and making headway for the trawler which rides at anchor some way off. But sometimes it happens that after one of these orgies the boat is steered badly or not at all, and consequently is engulfed with all hands by an advancing sea.

An accident of this kind does not trouble the Dutchman very greatly however, for he will be out of reach of any inquiry that may be made.

Next morning he lifts anchor and sails leisurely for another part of the fleet. He never stops in one place for long, for he knows the drawing powers of newness, and plans his circuit so that by the time he reaches each group of vessels his customers will be impatient for his arrival and for the ill goods he has to offer them.

HERBERT YOUNG.

WARNING

to Smokers of Black Cat Virginia Cigarettes.

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The Outer Man

A WEEKLY FEATURE.

Conducted by

CAPTAIN L. H. SAUNDERS.

BACHELOR BUTTONS.

There is nothing derogatory in a man sewing on a button for himself, a thing which every bachelor in lodgings ought to know how to do.

For a few pence one can purchase what is, I believe, called a "house-wife," containing a couple of reels of strong thread, some needles and a pair of scissors. With this outfit the bachelor is independent of his landlady's good pleasure in the matter of button fixing.

There, however, I think the man's ambitions in the tailoring line ought to cease. I once knew an old merchant skipper who thought nothing of ripping out a whole seam in a coat, taking it in or letting it out, and sewing up the seam again as neatly as before. He was a man whose clothes always appeared to fit him, but he confessed to me once that it was his invariable practice to patronise the cheapest tailor and to alter the garments to suit himself.

He was an exceptional man in many respects, and I fear that if I or my readers were to follow in his footsteps we should land ourselves in disaster.

FANCY SOCKS.

The present popularity of the shoe gives much scope to the designer of socks. Until recently fancy socks for men were reserved for the ballroom, but now one may see every variety for day wear. To be strictly correct, the stripes with which the socks are ornamented should run up and down, and not round and round the ankle. For evening wear I think there are none to equal those of black silk sparsely embroidered with dark blue flowers.

The other day my hosier turned out for my inspection some elaborate socks which had been made for dressy customers. Each pair was enshrined in a morocco case. One had been embroidered with imitation jewels, and another had been embellished with handpainting.

One pair was of old lace. I admit a liking for novelty in the matter of men's wear, but I think that the last mentioned type of sock should be reserved for the feminine ankle. Nobody wants to see a man's skin through his socks, whatever may be our feeling with regard to the feminine stocking.

THE TWO EXTREMES.

While breakfasting in a country hotel the other day, I met a commercial traveller, and by degrees our conversation turned to the subject of dress. He was not by nature a dressy man, and he regarded it as one of the hardships of his trade that he was compelled to preserve a better clad exterior than other men of the same income. He explained to me that he believed he had reduced the matter of dressing cheaply to a fine art.

"If your collar and your boots are clean and good," he said, "you give the general impression of being well dressed. I do not wear shabby suits, but I have not the money to be always getting new ones. In the matter of boots and collars, however, I am what some people might call extravagant, but I find the result satisfactory."

Limiting the matter of dress in this manner will scarcely appeal to the man whose taste is more orthodox and whose purse is larger, but the maxim is a safe and useful one for those who wish to appear to the best advantage at a minimum of outlay.

THE PRICE OF CAPS.

You will find in the same shop caps at 3s. 6d., 2s. 6d., and 1s. 6d. The inferiority of the cheapest grade is obvious to the most casual observer, but the difference between the 2s. 6d. and the 3s. 6d. ones is by no means obvious even after a fairly close examination. Yet I always regard that extra shilling as an excellent investment. It gives you just the same difference that you get for the extra sovereign or so that forms the dividing line between an inferior suit and one that will look well till it is threadbare.

A cap can play you all kinds of tricks. Most of them nowadays have a stud fastening which fixes the loose cloth in front down to the peak. In a cheap cap the butt of this stud shows a great inclination to become separated from the cloth, and moreover there comes in time a perfect epidemic of bursts among the seams.

For the extra shilling you may rely on good workmanship throughout. The cap will keep its shape, will shrink less, will not fade so soon and will be in every way more satisfactory than the cheaper make.

As for the 1s. 6d. caps I should regard their purchase as gross extravagance, for their life is very short.

You must pay for decent quality.

BELTS.

In certain sports, particularly riding, it is admitted that one obtains a considerable advantage in fighting fatigue by wearing a suitably constructed body-belt. The chief thing to guard against is getting one made from a thick woollen fabric. Such a belt is far too warm, and it is said by medical men to have a bad effect on the kidneys; certain it is that you run a risk of chills when you take it off.

The usual riding belt is made of thin webbing or stout linen, and has a piece of elastic let in at each side. Some men prefer to do without the elastic, holding that the webbing alone is less yielding and thus gives more support.

The other day I was shown a belt which appeared to have a good deal to recommend it. It was made of leather, and had a couple of horizontal slits along the side; each side of the belt was thus divided into three wide strips, and the middle one had been cut across and fitted with a strap and buckle so that it could be tightened separately. It was thus possible for the wearer to tighten the belt as much as he liked along the actual waist line, a thing that cannot be done with the ordinary body-belt.

BOOT REPAIRING.

I want to give you a little tip which may save you some annoyance. If you have a pair of boots the soles of which are sewn, and you send them to be resoled, the chances are that the new sole will be sewn on to the welts, every stitch showing and entirely spoiling the appearance of the boot. There is a tradition amongst bootmakers that sewing is ever so much better than tacking; it is, so far as they are concerned, for it enables them to charge more for their work.

As a matter of fact, however, it is advisable to have the soles of thick boots tacked on, for then there will be no stitches to clash with those already on the welts. The only fault with tacking is that it does not give you quite so flexible a sole as sewing would do, but in the case of thick soled boots the difference in flexibility is not perceptible.

Another little point is this. It may be that you wear down the toes of your boots quicker than any other part, and you have occasionally to send them to the repairer simply to be re-toed. Many cobblers insert the new patch in such a way that the sole projects above it.

They consider this particularly neat, and when the boot comes home you can scarcely detect where the patch joins the original, but in a short time you will find that the edge of the sole works its way off the patch. It is much better to have the patch tacked on direct above the sole without any of this overlapping. Such a repair will last twice as long as the one of alleged superior neatness.

CLOTHES AND THE MIND.

Have you ever observed the effect which dress seems to have on the minds of some men? There is an estimable old gentleman—"Something in the City," I suppose—who generally travels to town in the train I also patronise. Most days he is the embodiment of sedateness of a type that may perhaps be regarded as out of date.

From the spotless glossiness of his silk hat to the immaculate patents which adorn his feet, he is the very summit of exactness and precision. When he buys his paper at the bookstall he takes out his money with great deliberation. Even when he opens the door of his railway compartment he does it slowly and with dignity.

But a change comes over the old gentleman on Saturday mornings. He plays golf somewhere on the other side of London, and apparently goes to his game direct from his office, for on Saturdays he is to be seen dressed in golfing toggery. His air of deliberation vanishes with his frockcoat. He runs up one side of the railway footbridge and trips down the other. Very often he invests in a sporting paper as well as his morning journal, and his voice will be raised in hearty salutation of the stationmaster or the bookstall clerk. For the moment he has dropped twenty or thirty years from his age, and I am convinced it is the golfing suit that does it.

DIGNITY MAKING.

There was once a seedy individual who scraped acquaintance with your humble writer on the same railway platform on which the ancient gentleman of the above paragraph disports himself. The seedy one used to address me with a deferential "Good morning," and would sometimes venture on a remark about the weather. He was wholly a no-account person, and my chief anxiety in dealing with him was not to trample upon his feelings.

One morning, however, I found him dressed for a marriage, not, as one might have expected such a man to dress, with exaggeration and loudness, but as tastefully and well as the strictest critic could have demanded. He was a transformed being.

Not only had my sense of his inferiority vanished, but it was obvious that he also had lost it. He was now in his own estimation, as well as in mine, an equal. The man had risen in self-esteem with the accession to better clothes. That is the only time I have seen him well dressed. Next day he was back to his former shabbiness and his deferential manner, but he has never seemed quite so inferior as he used to do.

HOUSE SHOES.

House shoes are amongst the things that well-intentioned but mistaken old ladies insist upon making for their male friends. If diplomacy compels you to accept these gifts, you must bow to the inevitable; if you receive a pair every month you will be able to keep your feet fairly comfortable when indoors, for they don't last long.

The man who has to provide his own slippers will do well to avoid those fearsome creations of carpet or worsted. Nothing is better than an old pair of dancing pumps. If they have lost their pristine smartness and have developed a few cracks, they have also lost their tightness, and are the more comfortable.

A pair of pumps, even when old and cracked, look neat and dressy.

Failing a pair of pumps, invest in a cheaper imitation of the same, but let the material be leather, and avoid those that have no heels.

A man wants a pair of house slippers that are not too thin for an occasional step into the garden. A lazy morning or evening at home is spoilt if you have to change your slippers every time you want to go outdoors for a moment. To walk far in slippers is, of course, fatal to them, but they should be sufficiently strong to withstand the gravel of the garden walks or the possible moisture of the lawn.

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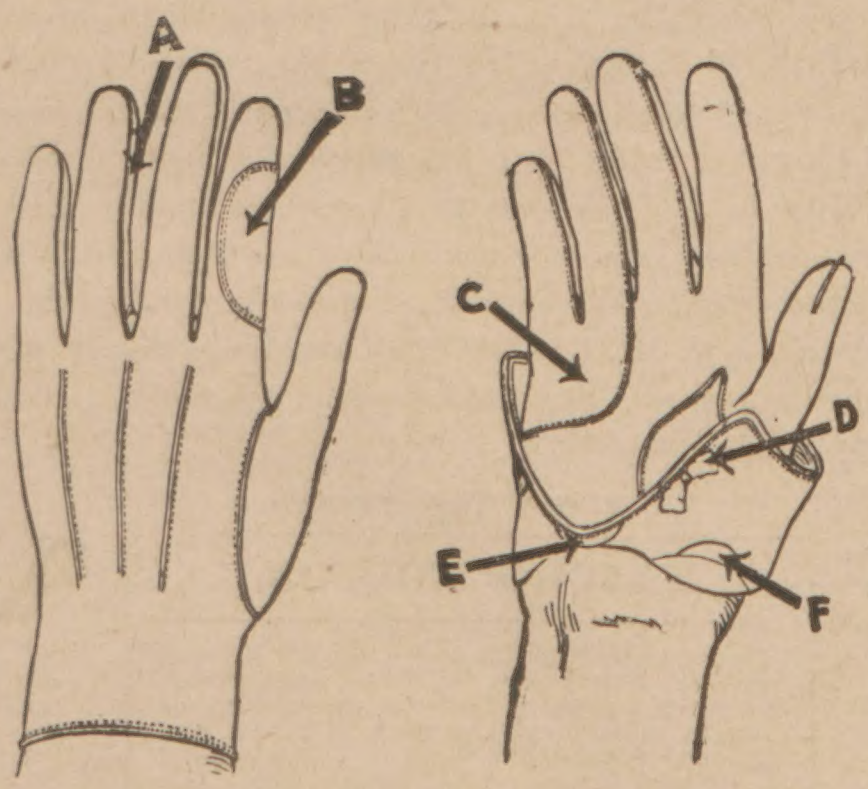

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